



A Sunday evening at Tlaloc el Mexicano

non-immigrants. Undocumented entrepreneurs face unique hazards. They live on the edge everyday, Beto said. They could build or expand, but it could all disappear tomorrow. Activism could expose this frailty, so statements had to be well-timed and somewhat unintrusive. Protest couldn't interfere with a customer's needs.

May Day evening in downtown Athens, the migrant community made the loud declarations that its restaurants couldn't. Under a clear sky, roughly three hundred people snaked past churches, through the University of Georgia campus, then halted in front of the county courthouse. Beto brandished a bullhorn to lead chants for a crowd that drew immigrants from around north Georgia. Noe skated across the courthouse steps, jumping and sliding

to a tempo set by his brother's amplified call. Elders and DREAMers emerged from long work and school days to unfold homemade signs. NO MORE DEPORTATIONS. DON'T BREAK UP OUR FAMILIES. WE ARE THREADS IN A QUILT THAT SHOULD NOT BE UNSTITCHED.

Afterward, more than a dozen of us, three generations of immigrants and activists from a handful of countries, ate dinner at Tlaloc to celebrate a successful march. Sitting at outdoor picnic tables, we clinked icy mugs of beer and spooned chocolatey molés with rolled tortillas. Antonio walked outside with another tray of drinks. He set it down and threw an arm around Beto. Enjoy yourselves, Antonio said. Dinner was on him. But please, he smiled, leave a good tip. ♡

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FOODS FROM A MARRIAGE

BY JACK PENDARVIS

1. A CRACKER



Sunday nights the street was quiet.

Clementine stood at the front door, looking out.

"Whatcha see out there? Anything?" said Boris.

"Mm-nnh," said Clementine. She had a cracker in her mouth.

"Wind's blowing," said Boris.

2. BROWNIES



"These brownies really are amazing," said Clementine.

"I know! And I don't even like brownies," said Boris.

3. TWO BEERS



Clementine came home from a party.

"Oh, stumbling in drunk," said Boris.

"I had two beers," said Clementine.

"I thought you weren't staying," said Boris.

"I danced a lot. They had a DJ"

"Who was it?"

"Oh, a friend of David's."

"Who did you see?" said Boris.

"Chris. He said hello."

"Did you make some excuse for me?"

"I said you were flying under the radar."

"Who did you dance with? Jaime?"

"Yes, and Beth Ann, of course."

An old movie was playing on TV but Boris wasn't watching it. It was just on in the background while he was reading. Greta Garbo was the queen of Sweden. She was nibbling grapes from a bunch that her lover dangled over her head.

Boris read Clementine some facts about grizzly bears, about how they rolled in the snow and acquired a coat of ice that could stop a bullet. He said it was better not to shoot at them anyway.

"Why?" said Clementine.

"A wounded grizzly bear will kill you," said Boris.

4. PEPPERS



"You certainly are the gassy one today," said Clementine.

"Well, peppers," said Boris. "Peppers are great gas producers."

5. TURKEY LEGS



"I think they're scuffed already," said Boris.

"I like a leather shoe that's been broken in a little," said Clementine. "So the leather is worn and it can develop a personality."

"Okay," said Boris. "I forgot to shake 'em out. I hope there's not a brown re-cluse inside."

"I think you'd have felt it by now," said Clementine.

Boris thought about it.



“Joe didn’t feel his until the next day,” he said. “When he started sweating uncontrollably.”

“I think he felt a pinch,” said Clementine. “Maybe I’m wrong.”

“Megan says she can meet me for drinks after my plane lands,” said Boris.

“That’s nice,” said Clementine.

“She said maybe I wouldn’t want anything to eat. She asked me if I was going to eat before Sunday. Eat before Sunday! I told her I didn’t think one meal would pop my buttons. She said okay, we could get something ‘non-gluttonous.’ Who does she think I am, Diamond Jim Brady?” Boris made gobbling noises and pretended to wave around a couple of juicy turkey legs. “Non-gluttonous! I guess she thinks I’m Old King Cole!”

6. DRIED APRICOT



Clementine wanted Boris to bring her a dried apricot, so he did.

“I like that movie where she gives him a dried apricot and he spits it in a napkin,” said Clementine.

“I don’t remember that,” said Boris.

“It’s famous,” said Clementine.

“I remember *Mulholland Dr.* where they give him espresso and he spits it in a napkin,” said Boris.

“It’s *The Long Goodbye*,” said Clementine.

“I don’t remember that part at all. Who is it?”

“Philip Marlowe,” said Clementine.

“Who gives him the apricot?”

“The femme fatale. I like that kind of detail.”

They had been talking during another movie, to which they now returned their attention.

“Now he’s basically got to kill Grendel,”

said Boris. “The monster at the middle of the maze.”

“Yeah,” said Clementine.

“Ooh, that shit has poison on it,” said Boris. A medicine man had dipped a claw into a bowl of inky liquid. There was a fight and the hero got a scratch.

“Now he’s been hurt like Hamlet!” said Boris.

“Oh no, is he going to die?” said Clementine. “I think it was *The Long Goodbye*.”

7. A BAD OYSTER



Clementine got hold of a bad oyster, which she deposited delicately into her napkin. She went for the nearest likely thing to get the taste out of her mouth. Boris started to say something about Clementine putting her funky oyster lips on his negroni.

“Whatever happened is already happening,” said Clementine.

Somehow Boris knew just what she meant.

8. SALMON



“Eat this last little piece of salmon so it doesn’t stink up the trash,” said Clementine.

“So now I’m a human garbage disposal,” said Boris.

“If that’s how you want to think of yourself,” said Clementine.

9. GUANCIALE



“So... white wine, garlic and bacon.”

“Or guanciale.”

“All right, I’m going.”

“What?”

Apples on a String with Dale, by Hayley Gaberlavage



“Nothing!”
 “What did you say?”
 “Huh?”
 “I said, ‘What did you say?’”
 “I can’t hear you!”
 “I was asking what you just said.”
 “I said, ‘Nothing!’”
 “What did you say before you said nothing?”
 “I... can’t remember. It wasn’t important.”

10. LEFTOVERS



Boris put a couple of eggs into some leftovers. That was their answer for everything! With a loud popping noise, some combination of undercooked egg, olive oil and red pepper flakes shot into his eye from the hot pan. He shouted about it.

“Turn down the heat!” said Clementine.

Soon they ate the leftovers.

“Well, that was pretty terrible,” said Boris.

“I actually thought it was good,” said Clementine.

“And my eye hurts,” said Boris.

“Oh no! Did you wash it out?” said Clementine.

“No,” said Boris.

“Well, you should do that,” said Clementine.

“I’m not going tonight. Tell them I got hot grease in my eye.”

“I’m not going by myself!” said Clementine.

“It’s too late anyway, the hot grease is already in my bloodstream.”

11. ARSENIC



Clementine and Boris were watching another movie with poison in it.

“I knew something was going to happen with that poison,” said Boris.

“Yes, very Victorian,” said Clementine. “Like when Lizzie Borden bought the arsenic for her sealskin cape.”

“Why did she need arsenic for her sealskin cape?”

“To clean it, somehow. And she told a neighbor that someone was trying to poison the family.”

“But you don’t think she did it?” said Boris.

“I just don’t think she could have done it!” said Clementine. “First of all, getting rid of all those objects when she never left the premises.”

“What objects?” said Boris.

“The axe, for one,” said Clementine.

“They never found the axe?” said Boris. “I didn’t know that.”

“They found some things, but never conclusively the actual ones.”

12. OATMEAL



Clementine was feeling discouraged about work. She and Boris were talking about it when Boris looked out of Clementine’s window and saw a big turtle moving fast across the yard.

“Look!” he said. “I hope it doesn’t go in the road.”

They watched as the turtle went toward the road. It ended up in the driveway, under their car. Clementine vowed to save it.

“You’ll get salmonella!” said Boris.

Clementine said she wouldn’t touch it with her hands.

“What are you going to use, some magic item that the germs won’t get through?”

Clementine got an old sheet to “wrap it up in.”

Boris had some oatmeal on the stove.

Apples on a String with Daria, by Hayley Gaberlavage





He went to get it. When he came back and looked through the front window, he couldn't see Clementine. He thought maybe she had crawled all the way under the car. She would do that. Finally she emerged with the sheet balled up. Obviously the turtle wasn't in it. Boris opened the front door.

"It's still under the car. I tried to turn it in the opposite direction, toward the yard," Clementine said.

Moments later she happened to look out and the turtle was right next to the road. She grabbed a hand towel from the laundry pile, ran out, grabbed the turtle, and carried it way to the back of the neighbor's yard. "That thing was booking it!" she told Boris.

"I think they can give you leprosy. I know armadillos can. Are you a leper now?"

"Perhaps in other ways," said Clementine.

13. DIPPING SAUCE



"Oh, I forgot to tell you I saw a couple of those crows," said Boris. "One of them had a container of sauce, you know what I mean?"

"Oh, like the dipping sauce for chicken-on-a-stick."

"Yeah, he had it in his mouth. He flew away with it."

"Did you see all three?"

"No, I just saw two of them."

"I only ever see the one woodpecker now."

"I thought he was always a loner."

"Well, I used to see two of them hanging out, early in the morning."

14. ICED TEA



Boris and Clementine were going to a party but they weren't sure there would

be food, so they ate at Volta first. They talked about the turtle from the other day.

"My hands were shaking when I carried it in that hand towel!" said Clementine. "When you said it might be a snapping turtle I was imagining some sort of snapping mechanism on its underbelly."

"A vagina dentata?" said Boris.

"Exactly!" said Clementine.

"What would make you think something like that?"

"My head," said Clementine.

"I think it was a gopher," Boris said.

"The kind of tortoise my grandfather called a gopher."

"It was just under the car staring at me. That turtle was suicidal."

"They live a long time."

"It didn't have cracks on its shell, but there were some rough places."

"If they have those barbecue sandwiches at the party I might eat one if I feel like it."

"I don't want to stay long. You can get a ride home."

"You'll have to let me in. I didn't bring a key."

The server came and took their glasses away for refills.

"I meant to stop her," said Clementine.

"I'm not a big refill fan."

"You don't have to drink it," said Boris.

15. BEANS



"What did he say about your mole?"

"You were right. He said somebody needs to look at it. He recommended somebody. He said it was a simple mole, then he said, hmm, it's rolled up at the edges."

"What does 'rolled up at the edges' mean?"

"I don't know, I'm not a doctor! Oh,

you're gonna love this. The medicine he gave me? He said it's going to make me nervous and stay up all night." Boris read his pill bottle. "Three tablets by mouth daily. Do you think that means I take them all at once?"

"You should call and ask."

"Nope!" said Boris. He put three pills in his mouth at once.

"You!" said Clementine.

Boris walked over to the stove and poured some wine into a pot of beans. "Is that enough?" he said.

"No, you should cover them," said Clementine.

Boris poured the whole bottle of wine into the beans.

"I can't believe I wasted that whole bottle of wine," he said. "That was good wine. Well, that'll make 'em good, right? Damn it! I meant to caramelize the onions before I did that."

"That's okay, I put raw onions in beans all the time," said Clementine. "You got any other moles on your body you need somebody to look at? Like Cotton Mather?"

"I figure I'll just strip down and give 'em the whole sad picture."

16. MEAT



"They are lean, withered, hollow-eyed, look old, wrinkled, harsh, much troubled with wind, and a griping in their bellies, dejected looks, flaggy beards, terrible and fearful dreams. Sister Anne, what dreams be these that confound and appall me! Continual, sharp, and stinking belchings, as if the meat in their stomach were putrefied."

Jack Pendarvis has written five books. He won two Emmys for his work on the television show Adventure Time.

"I'm glad you're reading this to me while I'm eating," said Clementine.

17. OFF-BRAND COOKIES

Their friends Chris and Melissa were temporarily subletting a little house nearby while their own home was renovated. When Chris and Melissa were called out of town unexpectedly, they asked Boris and Clementine to take in their mail at the new place. On the first day, Clementine went by herself. The second day it was just getting dark when she remembered. She asked Boris to walk with her because the house had crept her out. "It has a tucked-away feeling. Maybe Melissa saying she's uncomfortable there wormed its way into my brain."

They grabbed the keys and went out their front door. "What's all this trash in the yard?" said Clementine. There were scraps scattered around. Boris picked up one of them, a torn label.

"Some kind of off-brand cookie?" he said. "Homekest?"

"What's *that*?" said Clementine, pointing at something else.

"I'm not touching that," said Boris.

They walked to the little house. It was tucked away in greenery as Clementine had implied.

"It doesn't look scary. It looks quaint," said Boris. "Is she a witch?"

"Why?" said Clementine.

"She has moons on all her shutters."

"You have the key," said Clementine.

But there wasn't any mail so they didn't need the key. It rained gently and they walked home in the rain. ☔