

And this week...

The other night, hand in pockets, I went for (yet another) midnight walk. The air was crisp enough so that a neighbor had built a fire in his fireplace rather than turn the central heating back on and the air smelled deliciously of bonfires which I love each and every time I experience it, the moon was nearly full and the sky was so clear that several constellations burned so brightly that I could see my way without a flashlight and, despite my near heart attack in the actual moment when it happened, I enjoyed watching the rabbit who exploded out of a bush as I rounded the corner of my house disappear across the road and into the neighbor's garden, cotton ball of a tail bouncing luminously in the moonlight. You would think that I would be used to all of this by now as it happens regularly on my evening strolls and I have written about it before.

It was a lovely walk. The world around me felt peaceful and I felt at peace with the world. For a short span of time, I could forget those many, in so many countries, who are experiencing war, hardship, and the dismantling of their way of life through no fault of their own. What is happening in Ukraine is horrible and the fact that every 55 seconds a Ukrainian child becomes a refugee breaks my heart, but we also need to be thinking of -- and helping those -- in Syria, Yemen, Sudan and South Sudan both, Ethiopia, North Korea, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of Congo, to name only those areas that I can think of off the top of my head from steady reading of the news. And this is not to say that things are rosy at home either. The state of the United States makes me want to weep. Naïve though it may sound, I cannot quite fathom how this nation, once the beacon of democratic hope for the world, has gone so horribly wrong and so many disgusting people spouting abhorrent rhetoric have climbed out from under the rocks where they used to live. And don't get me started on climate change, or food waste, or inflation, or people in power having

opinions on things that are absolutely none of their business, bigoted and immoral opinions that they can somehow make pass into law, or the fact that 23 states now do not require a permit to carry a concealed firearm. Anyway, I am pretty sure I have stated all of this in newsletters past when I have been up on what an Uber driver recently referred to as my “weeping heart, leftie liberal soapbox.”

Hopefully, these thoughts (of the ever so slightly repetitive Sturm und Drang variety) explain why I have not been sending out my weekly newsletter over the past few weeks, nor consistently posting recipes. These things feel fairly trivial in the grand scheme of things. I do thank all of you who have taken the time to reach out to see if I were all right. Like many of the sane still walking amongst us, I struggle daily with the thoughts above and the sadness that this is the world that we are handing to our children to try to fix; they deserve so much better than this manmade mess.

Still, for those who will think to reach out after reading this to check on me again, I am actually not quite as depressed as I sound. In fact, I have had a slight uptick in general spirits and outlook, and I feel a little bit like the girl in *Poltergeist* (the movie) -- “I’m ba-a-ack!” Along with the dark thoughts that spool through my brain, I also experience gratitude daily for what I have, which is so much more than most do. I try to be kind no matter what the upfront cost to me, and I continue to find moments of true joy in small things, like discovering the first crocuses of the spring, or sitting on my stoop at 6AM, drinking a perfect cup of coffee and watching the fog, as Carl Sandberg so lyrically put it, “coming on little cat feet.” I can be happy for a precious moment just by hearing the finches announce their arrival for their stay until October, or by writing a paragraph that flows easily and knowing that it is good prose, or – more to the point of my blog – by making and eating a good meal.

And for that reason, I started to post recipes again. If you are experiencing the same deep-in-your-bones lassitude at the state of the world that I am, hopefully,

reading one of my recipes will spark a tiny moment of joy in you. Perhaps you will make it and share the dish with family and/or friends and have a nice meal and pleasant evening. A moment of human connection. And maybe, just maybe, that means that writing about food is not so trivial after all. And, if we string enough of these moments together in a day, maybe at bedtime, as we reflect upon the hours since we woke, the day past will look like a good one, one that we are exceptionally lucky to live in a world gone mad.

Here is what I have posted since going newsletter-dark.

[Chili-Garlic Edamame](#)

[Oni \(Devil's\) Eggs](#)

[Dashi from scratch](#)

[Roasted Acorn Squash Salad](#)

[Cantonese Style Scrambled Eggs](#)

[Baked Falafel Salad with Carrot-Tahini Dressing](#)

[Spaghetti Alla Nerano](#)

[Scallion Pancakes](#)

["Gilded" Nasu no Miso Dengaku](#)