

TIMES ONLINE

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J.C.

* Since food became "cultural", it has been the fashionable thing to add recipes to a piece of writing. Memoirs are particularly recipe-friendly.

Colette Rossant was among the first to use the now common sub- title, writing first *Apricots on the Nile: A memoir with recipes*, followed by *Return to Paris*:

A memoir with recipes, and now *Madeleines in Manhattan: A memoir with recipes*.

Emma Tennant has given us *Corfu Banquet: A seasonal memoir with recipes*. If you are one of the few people not writing a memoir, there is always fiction: among the most successful food-culture books is *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel, "A novel in monthly instalments with recipes . . .". For recipe poetry, we recommend the New York journal *Alimentum*, the latest issue of which contains works such as "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Nantucket Bay Scallop" and "How To Eat a Pet".

Daniel Rogov has broadened the scope with *Rogues, Writers and Whores*, an encyclopedia of historical figures -Catherine de'Medici, Elizabeth I, Zola, Maupassant, Proust etc -"with recipes" (Toby Press, Pounds 14.99). Some are obvious: the Joyce recipe could not be anything but "Stuffed mutton kidneys".

Disappointingly, the Proust recipe is not for what Mr Rogov calls "a Madeleine cookie", but a complicated terrine de lapin which Proust probably mentioned somewhere. Chichikov, the hero of Gogol's *Dead Souls*, liked to eat "cabbage soup, sheep's stomach stuffed with porridge and brains, open tarts, some with onions, some with curds and some with fish", after which Rogov's un-Gogolian "chicken stuffed with beef and nuts" sounds ordinary.

Has anyone ever tried to cook from a memoir or novel or poem "with recipes"? Rogov's entry on the Marquis de Sade offers the information that, when locked in the Bastille, the Marquis "whiled away the hours drinking Claret and eating truffled oysters", followed by the recipe: "48 oysters removed from their shells . . . 1 oz fresh truffles . . .

Brittany sea salt . . ." (ordering truffles is easier in French prisons). More practical is Sade's tip for getting friends into a party spirit: "chocolate pastilles infused with Spanish fly", which cause those who eat them "to carry on as if in the grip of a most amorous frenzy".

* The centenary of W. H. Auden will be marked in the TLS of February 9. In advance, we offer this drawing of the poet, which first appeared in the paper on January 21, 1969. The artist was Edward Harrison, then a student at the University of Kent. Auden was there to deliver the T. S. Eliot Lectures (collected as *Secondary Worlds*) and Mr Harrison, a caricaturist for the student newspaper, asked him for a sitting. "It took place in the senior common room", Harrison, who now lives in Aldington, Kent, told us. "He was dressed in assorted old clothes and slippers, and chain-smoked. He was taciturn and grumpy, but nevertheless patient." Harrison felt that the distinctive lined face "was easy to capture, but it took me some time to work out how to take it to the next stage. I decided to mould the lines of the face as if they were the layers of melted wax around a candle". He found Auden's Eliot lectures "disappointing", and it so happens that the TLS reviewer of *Secondary Worlds*, Denis Donoghue, agreed: "Mr Auden agreed to deliver the lectures as a compliment to Eliot, his master. But the compliment would have been finer if he had taken the occasion more seriously".

* If you think the romance of little-magazine production is dead, consider the case of *The Dark Horse*, "the Scottish-American poetry magazine". The romance consists in setting up your editorial office in a caravan (doubling as home) on the west of Scotland; typesetting the magazine yourself; walking two miles from the caravan site to the nearest bus stop to get to the post office, in case someone has taken a subscription; then, on the happy day that the new issue arrives from the printer's, making the same walk with bundles of copies under each arm. This counts as the launch

party.

Gerry Cambridge founded The Dark Horse in Ayrshire in 1995. He has since upgraded his caravan, but continues to design and typeset the thrice-yearly journal himself. Cambridge feels that the US connection "helps lift the journal's concerns clear of uncritical allegiance to what can be the claustrophobic -if spirited and carnivorous -Scottish scene". The latest issue, Number 19, contains a thirty-page section devoted to the Scottish poet Stewart Conn. Born in 1936, Conn falls between two squads of outstanding Scottish writers: too young to be associated with the great MacCaig, Mackay Brown, Morgan, Crichton Smith and Garioch forward line; too old to get a five-a-side kickabout with the lads -Don Paterson, Kathleen Jamie, John Burnside, W. N.

Herbert and A.N. Other. The Horse offers two new Conn poems, together with an interview and a critical essay by Douglas Dunn. Subscriptions to The Dark Horse are Pounds 11 and \$18, from 3-B Blantyre Mill Road, Bothwell G71 8DD.

* The Yiddish writer Itche Goldberg, who in 2004 surfaced during our search for the oldest book by a living author, has died in New York, aged 102. Strictly speaking, Goldberg was not eligible, but we thought that his production of the children's periodical Yungvarg in 1926-27 -mostly filled with his own essays and stories - deserved a special mention. In April last year, we were pleased to be contacted by his daughter, who told us that her father had recently published a new book of essays, in Yiddish, Essayen Tsvey. This surely made Itche Goldberg the oldest writer ever to have published a new book?

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