

# Perpetual Indulgence



Lost-N-Found Youth is an Atlanta, Georgia based non profit (501c3) that exist to end homelessness for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, queer (LGBTQ+) and all sexual minority youth.

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## December Dream Sequence

Emily Montgomery

Pick up the pup, rest his weight on your forearm. Carry him through the trees. Take that rope from the roots and knot it to his collar. Tie a bow, be a present. Be a gift, love a giver. The man says: Pass the pine forest and turn right at the holly for fresh water. Green, green sprouts; bigger, smaller, bigger here. Tastes like cider too long on the tongue. Now, smile big. Take the photo of the family, tell them smile big. By the gas station; in front of the gas station. Back up; again. Family's getting bigger. Back up; more. Stand on the chair. Too big to fit. Make some sit. Ancestors sit; young'uns against the wall. Hey, there's a wedding dress here somewhere; there's a marriage there somewhere. Not a good match, those shoes and dress. Later, making gingerbread at Jenny's. I'm the oven. No—in the oven. She's the couch. No—she's on the couch. New bathrobe, new tattoo. Laying across the spine. Sneak in the toilet for gossip. Whispers, piss, water running. You are stuck inside. String tied to the bed. Umbilical cord attached to the bed. Skin growing into the bed, sheets growing into you. Where are the scissors? Run the mistletoe, listen for kisses. It was you, but not you. You know it's always you, but not you.

# Jodi's Cheesecake Recipe

Michelle Meyers

## Ingredients

### Graham Cracker Crust

1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs  
1/3 cup white sugar  
6 tablespoons butter, melted

### Filling

8 oz. cream cheese (room temperature)  
1/2 cup milk (2% or whole)  
1/2 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla

### Topping

8 oz. light sour cream  
1/2 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
Canned cherries in heavy syrup (optional)

## Directions

1. To make the graham cracker crust, mix the graham cracker crumbs, sugar, and melted butter until well blended. Press the crust into a spring form pan and bake at 350 for about ten minutes. If the crust begins to slump, you can use a spoon to re-prop it up the sides of the spring form.
2. For the filling, combine cream cheese, milk, sugar, and vanilla in a bowl. Combine the cream cheese and sugar before adding the milk to prevent it from getting lumpy.
3. After the crust is done, turn the oven down to 300 and pour the filling in. Bake for about ten to fifteen minutes, usually a little more than that.
4. For the topping, combine the sour cream, sugar, and vanilla. Allow cheesecake to set in the fridge for a little while, then pour on topping. Add cherries if desired.



# How to Make Salsa de Chile

Ivonne Ayala

Ingredientes:

\*5 Tomatillos (Mexican Husk Tomatoes)

\*5 Chiles Serrano (Serrano Pepper)

\*2 Ajos (Garlic Cloves)

\*1 Manojito de Cilantro (A Bunch of Cilantro)

\* Sal (Some Salt)

Ingredients:

\*5 Memories

\*5 People

\*2 Significant Meals  
shared with family

\*1 Sorrow

\*A wish



I'm not sure what drew me into my grandmother's kitchen. It might have been the smell of beans cooking in a low fire, the warmth of the early morning coffee, or maybe it was the Mexican charros singing from a small, black radio. However, I'm glad I stuck around and watched her cook.

Twelve years have gone by since she passed away. Looking at an empty kitchen, I'm in charge of cooking when my mom is out and before any food can be made, *la salsa* has to be the first visitor sitting at the table. Every time I enter a kitchen, memories of my grandmother and a small girl whose hair was straight and short, cloud my mind. It would be a lie to say that the plates I create with my grandmother's recipes taste the same. Every cook has their own secret ingredient that cannot be reproduced or copied. That is why I decided that I would add my own touch by thinking about; memories, people, significant meals with family, a sorrow, and a wish. Here is how you make it.

*Mode d' Emploi:*

Place a pot with water to boil. Have all your *chiles* and *tomatillos* washed. Think of 5 memories and 5 people. Make sure you do not put anything in the water until it is completely boiling or else everything will turn brown. Believe me I've done it and my *salsa* looked like brown bean soup instead of bright green. My grandmother always said "if you watch the pot it will never boil." Therefore, let me tell you about my memories while we wait.

- My grandfather came up to me while I stood in front of the Virgin of Guadalupe's picture as I was bouncing a ball at the age of 6. He asked me if I knew how to whistle? I didn't. He stayed with me until we both could whistle to my grandmother's canary. – PLACE FIRST CHILE AND TOMATILLO IN POT
- I recall my first best friend named Claudia. We were in 2nd grade and it was the last day of school. She had an oval face with straight hair and she gave me a brown teddy bear. She was going to move to Mexico, I was staying in El Paso, TX; I never saw her again. – PLACE SECOND CHILE AND TOMATILLO IN POT
- I remember my aunt Isabel. Probably the smartest woman I've ever met. She is the reason why I love books and why I don't drink Coca-Cola. – PLACE THIRD CHILE AND TOMATILLO IN POT
- Mona was the lady who helped us clean our house. She lives in Juarez across the border. She would come and show me how to make flour tortillas. When a tortilla was warm and would blow up

she would say that I would soon get married. I would laugh every time. – PLACE FOURTH CHILE AND TOMATILLO IN POT

- I know that my sister always likes *la salsa* to be very spicy. She says that if a salsa is not spicy then it is mediocre. – PLACE FIFTH CHILE AND TOMATILLO IN POT

By now I know you are thanking God that the recipe only has 5 *chiles* and 5 *tomatillos* in it, or else the memories and people in them would keep on flowing right into this page. Let me tell you that having or sharing a Mexican meal is like peeling garlic cloves. Once you eat it, the flavors remain with you forever. At this moment, peel your two garlic cloves and add them into the pot. Thankfully, the garlic smell in your fingernails can be taken off if you rub a lime on them.

Coming from a large Mexican family every meal that I shared was always significant. The first one that comes to my mind is the Christmas dinners. The cooking would start at 7:00 AM and dinner would be served at 9:00 PM. I would always peel potatoes. The benefit of cooking, I realized, is that you get to eat a little bit of everything. If I was chopping carrots, one would be placed on the salad, the other would go to my mouth. If the icing for a cake needed to be tasted, I would sacrifice myself until it was perfect. That is why I enjoy cooking. Christmas and the food that had been prepared brought the family together. There was joy in the faces of my uncles and aunts in tasting my grandmother's food, reminding them of their childhood.

The second significant meal I can recall is the first time I tasted tequila. I was 6 or 7 years old and my grandmother had cooked spinach soup, my favorite dish. As usual, I had set the table placing *la salsa* in the center next to the salt, the salad bowl, and the napkins. Alejandro Fernandez was singing our favorite song, “Nube Viajera.” My uncles came for lunch, my mom, grandpa, and sister were all present. In Mexico it is a custom to remain sitting at the table after eating to engage in conversation and let all the food digest. We call this *sobre mesa*. My grandmother had a shot glass with tequila to help her digestion. As I kissed her cheek thanking her for the wonderful food, I met *Jose Cuervo*. That is the brand of the tequila she drank. I asked her if I could try it. My mom stared at her mom and I stared at my grandmother, of course this was a winning situation for me, her favorite grandchild. *Jose Cuervo* greeted my throat like a flaming dragon greets a knight trying to save a damsel in distress.

Everyone laughed at the face I made when I managed to swallow the small sip I had taken. “Ewww!” I told my grandmother, “why do you drink that?” She said that I would understand once I got older.

I did not rinse my mouth after trying tequila for the first time, but you however, need to \*WASH THE CILANTRO to finish the recipe.

Having said that, once it is washed put it in your blender. Part of the beauty of love is that it contains sorrow as well. I don’t want to mention a sorrowful moment in my life. But I’ve learned that when you’re cooking, for anything to come out *delicioso* you need to add LOVE (that’s what grandma always said.). And yes, I am still trying to locate the isle for that ingredient in Walmart, but it comes with practice.

I was 11 years old and she was dying. I was in Mexico with my family; she passed away on the month of July, the month of my birthday. I recall going into the funeral house, everyone was crying as if they were cutting onions in the kitchen. I walked up to her closed coffin. Tears instantly began to push out of my heart. I would feel a sudden pad on my shoulder or my back. But I held on to my arms; my head cradled by them. I had experienced death before, but now my favorite person had left. I could not find comfort, for a moment I thought it was all a dream. When I walked back to her kitchen after the funeral, it had become an altar. Flashbacks of her peeling carrots or sitting thoughtfully rolling a white paper napkin on her left index finger would appear like the vapor rising from her hot chipped coffee mug. I knew, but wanted to ignore the fact that I would no longer peel mangos with her during the month of June, or drink café ranchero at 8:00 AM. I would never have her ears to listen to my curiously random questions about life, and I would not have her there to check if the *salsa* tasted right. Fear grasped my entire being, because she had not left the most important recipe of all; how to live without her.

\*You can now turn off the stove and you'll notice that your *chiles* and *tomatillos* are soft. Add the *tomatillos* into the blender. Add the two garlic cloves. Now, if you want a HOT HOT *salsa* put all the *chiles* in the blender, I do not recommend that. Cut all the *chiles* in half and take out the seeds before blending. You can add some seeds into the blender to make it spicy afterwards. Finally make a wish; yes, we are at the final stage of our recipe. And yes, you can add some salt, and blend again.

Ever since she left, her memory accompanies me and is present every time I cook. She knew the recipes by heart and thankfully my mother wrote them down. After her death my mom found her diary. In it are her thoughts and poems about her grandchildren, I am mentioned often. The love that she had could be tasted in every meal I ever ate and cook by her side. After all these years, I wish I was still the little girl standing beside my grandmother learning how to cook all over again.



# Only At Christmas, a true story<sup>1</sup>

RBrown

I was in the old folks home visiting my granny  
when the oldtimers<sup>2</sup> revolted, led by sweet old Danny

They demanded better food and MTV for all  
but when they reached the kitchen, they found they'd reached a  
wall.

There stood a giant chef, a full 8 ft tall

so they put Plan B into action, a devious plot to turn young to old  
and there I was, youngest of them all if you've not been told.

They brought me in and strapped me down  
next to the best aging ray that could be found.

Then, as they set the dial to the dreaded age of 93  
the door burst open and in strolled The Doctor, Batman and  
Scooby-Doo

Scooby rushed to pull off the ancient ones' masks  
revealing slimey aliens given to The Doctor as his task  
while Batman got a ran from the limelight where he basked. <sup>3</sup>

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1 A POEM I WROTE WHEN I WAS 15 YOU'RE WELCOME  
WORLD

2 I'M SORRY ABOUT THE AGEISM THROUGHOUT, SMH @ 15 Y/O  
RB

3 THIS LINE IS PRETTY BLATANTLY PLAGIARIZED FROM "SA-  
DIE HAWKINS DANCE" BY RELIENT K GOOD JOB RB

The karate fighting commenced and of course the good guys won  
and as they flew off into the sun

The Doctor called behind them, "Merry Christmas to all  
and to all a good night!"<sup>1</sup>

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1 WOW WHAT A MESS THANKS 4 READING



## A Note

Thank you, dear reader, for your generous contribution to Lost-N-Found Youth and for indulging our voices when there are all around you voices clamoring. It can be difficult in this loud and profane and often horrifying time to find space for moments of quiet.

We hope these pieces in their meditations on dreamscapes and loss and memory find a place in your heart and in your home this holiday as you have found a place in ours.

Much love today & all the days to come,  
Wendy Dinwiddie

## Contributors

Ivonne Ayala was born in Torreón, Coahuila Mexico, and having lived in the border town of El Paso, TX, her works shows themes of family, food and the Spanish language.

RBrown is a poet from Ohio who spends a lot of time thinking about OUTER SPACE. Recent work can be found in VIDA Review, Shabby Dollhouse Review, Pittsburgh Poetry Review, and others. RB is most often found on twitter, @notalke.

Michelle Meyers is an MFA candidate at the University of Alabama. She is a former PEN Center Emerging Voices Fellow in Fiction and published her first novel, *Glass Shatters*, in spring 2016. Meyers is originally from Los Angeles, CA.

Emily Montgomery reads and writes and dreams. Recently she dreamt that she got lost shopping in a department store and then when she finally left for the holiday party, she spent half an hour driving around a parking lot trying to change her shoes. Who knows what chaos will ensue next time she lays down her head?

Meredith Ramella is from Mingo County, WV and is a self-proclaimed woman to watch. She lives in Tuscaloosa, AL with her cat Peaches.