

EGGS

IN MY GRANDMOTHER RACHEL'S KITCHEN, NOTHING WAS EVER WASTED. WHEN SHE WAS A YOUNG WIFE IN RUSSIA, THERE WAS NOT ALWAYS FOOD ENOUGH, AND SOMETIMES THE FAMILY WENT HUNGRY. HER HUSBAND WAS THE RABBI, AND SO WHATEVER FOOD THEY HAD WAS ALWAYS SHARED WITH OTHERS WHO HAD LESS, AND SHE HAD BECOME SKILLED AT MAKING WHAT THEY HAD GO A LONG WAY.

IT HAD NOT BEEN EASY.

PERHAPS THIS IS WHY, IN AMERICA, MY GRANDMOTHER'S KITCHEN WAS OVERFLOWING WITH FOOD. HERE IN THIS COUNTRY SHE RAISED HER DAUGHTERS TO KEEP AN EXTRA BOX AND BOTTLE UNOPENED IN THE PANTRY FOR EVERY BOTTLE AND BOX THAT WAS IN USE. ALTHOUGH SHE DIED BEFORE I WAS BORN, I WAS RAISED BY HER ELDEST DAUGHTER TO DO THIS SAME THING. ABSENTMINDED AS I AM, I OFTEN FIND I HAVE ACCUMULATED TWO OR EVEN THREE EXTRAS OF ANYTHING IN MY HOUSE.

BUT THIS ABUNDANCE DID NOT MEAN THAT THINGS WERE TO BE WASTED. EVERYTHING WAS ALWAYS USED TO THE FULL. EVEN THE TEA BAGS WERE USED TWICE.

THERE IS A FAMILY STORY TOLD ABOUT MY GRANDMOTHER'S ICEBOX THAT MAY NOT BE TRUE, BUT THEN AGAIN, PERHAPS IT IS. I HAVE HEARD IT EVER SINCE I WAS SMALL. GRANDMAS'S ICEBOX WAS THE DEEP SOURCE OF A TRULY AMAZING OUTPOURING OF GOODNESS. IT

WAS ALWAYS FULL TO THE VERY EDGES EVERY SHELF, EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY WAS PUT TO USE. OCCASIONLLY WHEN SOMEONE, USUALLY A CHILD, OPENED IT WITHOUT SUFFICIENT CAUTION, AN EGG WOULD FALL OUT AND BREAK ON THE KITCHEN FLOOR. MY GRANDMOTHER'S RESPONSE WAS ALWAYS THE SAME. SHE WOULD LOOK AT THE BROKEN EGG WITH SATISFACTION. "AHA", SHE WOULD SAY, "TODAY WE HAVE A SPONGE CAKE!"

BEFRIENDING LIFE IS NOT ALWAYS ABOUT HAVING THINGS YOUR OWN WAY. LIFE IS IMPERMANENT AND FULL OF BROKEN EGGS. BUT WHAT IS TRUE OF EGGS IS EVEN MORE TRUE OF PAIN AND LOSS AND SUFFERING. CERTAIN THINGS ARE TOO IMPORTANT TO BE WASTED. WHEN I WAS SIXTEEN, JUST AFTER THE DOCTOR CAME AND INFORMED ME THAT I HAD A DISEASE (CHROME'S DISEASE) THAT NO ONE KNEW HOW TO CURE, MY MOTHER HAD REMINDED ME OF THIS. I HAD TURNED TOWARD HER IN SHOCK, BUT SHE DID NOT CUDDLE OR SOOTHE. INSTEAD SHE REACHED OUT AND TOOK ME BY THE HAND.

"WE WILL MAKE A SPONGE CAKE," SHE TOLD ME FIRMLY. IT HAS TAKEN MANY YEARS TO FIND THE RECIPE, THE ONE THAT IS MY OWN, BUT I KNEW IN THAT MOMENT THIS WAS WHAT I NEEDED TO DO.

LIFE WASTES NOTHING. OVER AND OVER AGAIN EVERY MOLECULE THAT HAS EVER BEEN IS GATHERED UP BY THE HAND OF LIFE TO BE RESHAPED INTO YET ANOTHER FORM. THE MOLECULES IN YOU AND ME AND INDEED IN EVERYONE ARE SECOND HAND, BORROWED FOR THE

OCCASION AND RETURNED WHEN OUTGROWN. HOW STRANGE TO THINK THAT GREAT PAIN MAY BE IMPERMANENT. SOMETHING IN US ALL SEEMS TO WANT TO CARVE IT IN GRANITE, AS IF ONLY THIS WOULD DO FULL HONOR TO ITS TERRIBLE SIGNIFICANCE. BUT EVEN PAIN IS BLESSED WITH IMPERMANENCE; SLOWLY, DROP BY DROP, IT MAY BE WORN AWAY UNTIL EVEN THE MOST DEVOTED SEARCHERS CANNOT FIND IT UNLESS THEY LOOK FOR COMPASSION OR SOME OTHER FORM OF WISDOM.

TAKEN FROM MY GRANDFATHER'S BLESSINGS BY RACHEL NAOMI RAMEN. PP.258 - 259