

A BOMBASTIC CHRISTMAS: DISCUSSION ... FOOD!

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Various Foodstuffs To Adorn Our Dining Room With

With foods of all kind giving that brown-wood dining room pulpit a slap of color, our family got into a jovial mood, drinks in hands, stomachs with nothing to complain about, fully conscious of a scrupulous and scrumptious gala awaiting all of us. So first, a full classification of our foodstuffs that chart a sort of map that shows a trail to Christ's kingdom.

A dining room lit with bright lights (sparkling Romanian crystal), our family analyzing a rack of lamb, a yam dish (yams, with syrupy sugar surfacing, giving off a round of liquid in our mouths), a potato dish with cut-up dill, a broccoli in garlic and corn oil, a salad with balsamic from Italy, poultry shish kabobs, and a small roast pig with onion stuffing.

For drinks: Russian vodka (Stolichnaya) and whisky (Canadian, Scotch, bourbon and sour mash), cognac (four-and-a-half-star), and Coca-Cola (Classic), club soda (Canada Dry) and Jamaican rum, tonic and Bombay gin.

My stomach, as I took a look at my family, was asking for whisky on rocks, rum, and Coca-Cola, vodka tonic...on this day, who wouldn't drink? But don't allow this to fool you. I don't follow Christ's path, I think of it as just a normal holiday. By that I am saying: my Mom and Dad don't work two shifts.

Two Toasts By My Folks

"A round," said Dad, lifting his shot of vodka, "to our family's unity, for a vibrant spring which awaits us. I hold only a strong wish in this body, and I want all of us to look upon participants of this Shirinyan dynasty as building blocks for strong, firm foundations*. I want victory throughout all history in contracts that Shirinyans will join part in." Our family, in unison, drank to this toast of toasts that my dad put out into this world, on Christmas Day Two Thousand.

Information: my Dad's throat was acting up. Doctors didn't know what it was but things got stuck to his throat's lining, and an old lady from our old country had to blow things out by blowing air into his nostrils and massaging his throat. On an upcoming vacation Dad plans to go back to our old country and admit his throat to a hospital in which doctors, having a history of his throat situation, and that old lady's solution of blowing will find a way of curing him for good (a quick job lasting half an hour in which a part of his throat is sown).

Information: Dad, picking up an accordion in a Russian army unit, did not paint a portrait of his budding attraction toward that art. From accordions knit-out pianos. Dad has a piano now. I, Ara, hold a photo of Dad and pals in army days. A guy on drums, a guy on horns and Pop on accordion. Young and spilling must that music sound.

* Dad is not a fan of post-structuralism; what can I do?

Mom took up a cup of rum and Coca-Cola (Classic) and said, “Ara, David, Liana, husband, on this day I am happy to know in my soul* that our will-as-family will grow and, moving as if liquid, adapt to any misgivings that this world is willing to throw at us.” Taking a short stop, Mom got on with it. “Long ago, in a world which took my body to mould—as a small child—I took part in family rituals which, far from sugar, had units that fought—my Mom and Dad—and that, I know now, was not a sound situation within which a child should grow, but I, rising amid that static§, took away a know-how that only throws a strong will through my body, an authority to do good. I want you, my kin, to hold onto this now, and I wish you to know that I fought for that know-how that I so willingly hand onto you.”

Giving out a sigh, allowing Mom’s words to lay on my body, I took a sip of my whisky on rocks.

Author’s Turn To Toast

It was my turn to say a group of words about Christmas, to mix a bit of family story into it, to talk about David, Liana, (Tigranuhi) Mom, (Arshak) Dad, and roast pig—which I had at that instant in my mouth—and which I had to wash down with my whisky on rocks so that I could start.

“I had a handful of things that I was in a mood to talk about” (I took out of my pouch various writings that I would orally shoot out upon command), “(A) politics and our family, (B) going to a zoo and our family, and (C) music and our family. I know what you all might think: ‘Ara is trying too hard. Ara is showing off.’ But I’m not#. I did a lot of work on my options, which I lay in front of you at this instant. I thought it would stand out. Anyway, pick a topic so I can start.”

Mom, Dad, David and Liana took looks around our dining room for signs. David said, “Music and our family’.” Dad said, “Music and our family’.” Mom said, “Going to a zoo and our family’.” Liana said, “I would pick ‘music and our family’ but you buy awful music so I pick ‘going to a zoo and our family’.”

[Now this task is upon you. Pick an option A, B, or C]

A Politics And Our Family

“Our family has had a solid annual tour on this blindingly-dirty soil. All around this world, country upon country, is in war, corrupt capitalism, malady, and Shirinyans go on. I only worry that I might grow numb to that fixing this world is asking for at all turns. I want all of us to cry, to fight. I want us to stay strong and conduct our minds as though our family is busy sifting through trash (capitalist propaganda or our blind nationalisms)...” at this, Mom and Dad lost a bit of facial pink.

“Son,” said my Dad, “prior to starting your own Marxist branch, call to mind that our family found its roots in a Communist country, and that us Shirinyans found it constraining to carry on in such a situation. And don’t say that ‘that wasn’t Marxism’.”

Liana cut in with “What has this to do with Christmas?” *[Skip Parts B and C]*

* This word is archaic, and my Mom works it in its *archaicity*. What can I do?

§ No doubt a parody, conscious or not, of a sort of day soap on TV.

I was showing off. What can I do?

B Going To A Zoo And Our Family

“Upon our visit to our local zoo two months ago, containing animals from all parts of this vast world, I got a sad lump in my stomach. Why? Animals—happy in a box. Moving, taking a banana or hay for lunch, not having a displacing thought. I thought about us Shirinyans. Could it, days and months from now, pass around that Shirinyans too ran in similar fashion to that of animals in a zoo? In a box? Happy? Blindingly taking in information from a dominant authority?”

Liana cut in with “What has this to do with Christmas?”

Mom said, “Oh, Liana, don’t you know that Ara is an anti-Christ? In any situation, Son, don’t ruin Christmas!” [*Skip Part C*]

C Music And Our Family

“Dad plays piano. I play guitar. So music is always around. At birthdays, at work, in our cars, at bars and clubs...Dad knows lots of musicians...so always musicians around...sounds which bring sad, happy, in short, sounds that unify us.”

Liana cut in with “What has this to do with Christmas?”

“A lot!” I said. “For an instant, Liana, allow my words to go on. Music—parts, *notas*, bars, plots in music, an analogy for plots in our family, sad, happy, full of fury and guilt, giving and also taking, hydrating and also dying out.” Mom and Dad having lost color, I got in my last words. “I just want us to bring our rhythm down a bit. For our family’s profit*.”

Mom said, “I thought all was good.” Dad said, “All *is* good. Ara just wants to flash his words around.”

My Siblings

So, concluding my total loss at giving oration to my first following, my only family, I, not wanting to say much in addition, sat in my chair, and thought about things§.

David stood up, holding a cup of Coca-Cola. David is not a fan of alcohol, and said, “A crayfish# walks up to his dad and says, ‘Dad, what color is your blood?’ His dad looks at him and says, ‘I don’t know, son.’ ‘Why don’t you know?’ asks his son. ‘I’m color-blind’ says his dad. ‘What kind of color-blind?’ asks his son. ‘Son,’ says his dad, ‘I’m totally color-blind!’.”

* Funny thing is, I’m only saying dramatic things to look colorful, vibrant.

§ Stuff such as how amazing Grachan Moncur’s first album is and how it is similar to “Out To Lunch” by Dolphy, about how difficult it is communicating, about Socialism and Arabs struggling to find soil (original land), about Christ and my upcoming Visa card bill, about my body...about such things was I thinking as I took on this task of my footnoting.

David’s doing trials with crayfish at his school (UCLA), in which his task is to split roots which go to that animal’s command post, stimulating and giving drugs and writing down conclusions.

Liana said, "What has that to do with Christmas?"

David said, "I don't know."

Liana said, "Why don't you know?"

"Liana, you know that David is an anti-Christ, so don't construct stumbling blocks for him," said Mom.

"But," cut in Liana, "What a humiliation, a nasty traffic brought about on my Christmas by two anti-Christ, Ara and David. Mom, Dad, punish Ara! Ground David!" And, looking at David and I, "I am imagining a suicidal Santa from your orations!"

Information: Liana is in high school, has curly hair that, through aid of a hair iron, is now straight. Liana also plucks brows and cooks a-dish-a-night for our family. As a child, Liana's shins had a twist, a circular arch. Watching Liana walk and run into walls was funny, but not for too long. Mom and Dad took Liana to an institution for kids in a similar situation (that is, abnormal growth). Doctors at that Communist-run clinic could not find a practical way of making Liana's shins straight. A doctor put Liana in a tanning booth, thinking low amounts of radiation would do.

Now To Part Flatly By Cutting Fruit

Our post-dining-hour wasn't flat, just non-vocal. But non-vocal as if planning had got to do with (*saintly*, you could say). Bifurcation would finally halt this story, but until that point, Mom had to cut fruits, fruits that sat in a fruit bowl, on a fruit pulpit in our living room, with a sofa partially surrounding that array of crops, nuts and pastry products.

In strict, sharp fashion, Mom cut various fruits and, arranging in quick migrations of hand, from cutting bowl to small individual china for our family, Mom finally brought into fruition (you must pardon my pun) a work of art consisting of kiwi slicings, split apricots, tiny Brazilian bananas (without skin), pink figs (bursting with flavor), and sour plums.

Tasty food and fruits did us all in. Soon, family would split into plurals, that unity dividing so that individual tasks may construct about us. Mom and Dad would watch Russian TV, Liana would play hip-hop music or call a pal, and David and I would try to mutually (though from contradicting schools of philosophy) think and talk about what had just took hold of our day.