

LET ALONE FOR HUMANS

A METABOLIC EXORCISM

DECEMBER 17, 2025

Tonight, we will take part in a metabolic exorcism.

We will read, write, speak, eat, and digest words and sensations.

Each of the four courses of the dinner corresponds to a text. Each text is linked to a question, directly or indirectly connected to its content. Some of the recipes come from cookbooks written by collectives or non-profit organizations, while others have more personal histories. It will be up to us to understand how we relate to these texts, especially when they seem cryptic or disconnected from our present circumstances. The questions will allow hopes, pleasures, doubts, discomforts, pains, grievances, and future possibilities to emerge. To process—or metabolize—them, we will use our bodies, strengthening the bridge between our psyche and our organism. We will ask our guts to work with us in giving new meaning to these sensations. We will use our digestive systems, our stomach muscles, to break down the spirits that haunt us—expelling what intoxicates us and transforming the rest into nourishing matter.

The spirits haunting this group may be different from those that torment others. In engaging in any collective endeavor we need to consider all of its peculiarities, objectives, and potential obstacles. Let's focus on the specificity of this place, its roots, its ovens and foundations, its corridors and doors, without forgetting its windows, its tiles, its plants and cracks. Let's conjure its past inhabitant, its neighbors, its guests, and its intruders. They all make Becue into what it is today. Which ghosts will we keep on our side? Which ones will we need to transform? And into what? All of us also have their own private hauntings, too. An unresolved conflict that destroyed a collective, a relentless fear of closeness, or maybe an excess of enthusiasm too often unappreciated.

This exorcism will help us transform our relationship with the ghosts of Becue's past, and the ones from other shared spaces we might have traversed, allowing us to filter through what we can adopt and what we should discard or change in our collective engagements.

Like the sin eaters who consumed a meal on the graves of the dead to absorb their sins, we too will consume both a real and symbolic meal to transform and reinterpret the fears of our predecessors and peers while we face our own.



RITUAL PROCESS

Before each course, we read the text and the accompanying question together.

We take time to write our response and, if we feel comfortable, share it with others.

We consume the course, leaving our written response under our plate.

We metabolize our response and the ghosts it evokes.

ENTRÉE:

FLATBREAD AND ZA'ATAR

In 1977 Israel placed wild *Origanum syriacum* (za'atar) on its list of protected species, making the gathering, carrying, or selling of wild za'atar a punishable offense. While the law is officially justified as an ecological measure meant to prevent over-harvesting, it's clear that its enforcement disproportionately targets Palestinian people and undermines a centuries-old cultural practice in which families, especially women, forage za'atar as part of seasonal traditions and food heritage. It's a form of "green colonialism," where environmental protection becomes a tool to restrict Palestinian access to land and to practices that sustain cultural continuity. The ban is not about conservation, but about the erosion of Palestinian cultural autonomy and food sovereignty. Food, scents, plants, and aromas shape a culture as much as art and literature do.

On that day you taught me how to smell nature. You put your tea-cup down, stood, inhaled, inflating your lungs with air and scent. You captured the scent within your breast and your face turned red. When you returned to drinking your tea you spoke of za'atar and jasmine, of raspberry and wild-flowers. You said she resembled the seasons. In every season she would come to your cave wrapped in a new smell. She would untie her long black hair and spread out the scents of flowers and herbs. You said you were fascinated by the new scents again and again, as if she transformed into a new woman each time.

-Bab al-Shams, ELIAS KHOURY

WHAT IS GROWING? AND SHOULD WE PICK ITS FRUITS?

FIRST COURSE:

PASTASCIUTTA ANTIFASCISTA

And that's never felt like enough room, because I'm a spirit, [laughs] you know? I'm this massive energy like all humans are. So, so much of the work for me, of radical imagination is: what does it look like to imagine beyond the constructs? What does it look like to imagine a future where we all get to be there, not causing harm to each other, and experiencing abundance? And what — how do we make it compelling? Is it — do we tell the right kind of story? Do we need to write new music to make it compelling? How much conflict is necessary to have a compelling future, since humans seem to love it? I'm like, is there a right place for it? [laughs] All organizing is science fiction, right? It's like, we are reaching into the future, we are trying to project what we can imagine into the future, and organizing is a way of saying, we are going to put our hands directly on the future. We're not going to sit by and let injustice perpetuate. We are going to get involved and shape it into something that we can all be in. But it's also time-traveling backwards. So much of organizing is looking back, at what did our ancestors try, what did they learn, what were they up to?

-ADRIENNE MAREE BROWN interviewed in *On Being*, 2022

HOW CAN WE ORGANIZE OURSELVES LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE?

INFUSION:

PSEUDO NEPITELLA

SOUP

CURRIED LENTIL SOUP FROM "THE POLITICAL PALATE: A FEMINIST VEGETARIAN COOKBOOK", 1980

I want to tell the mosses' story, since their voices are little heard and we have much to learn from them. They have messages of consequence that need to be heard, the perspectives of species other than our own. The scientist within me wants to know about the life of mosses and science offers one powerful way to tell their story. But it's not enough. The story is also about relationship. These past few summers, I've been conducting research on rocks, trying to learn what I can about how communities form, by observing the way that moss species gather together on boulders. Each boulder stands apart like a desert island in a swelling sea of forest. Its only inhabitants are mosses. We're trying to figure out why on one rock ten or more species of moss may comfortably coexist, while a nearby boulder, outwardly the same, is completely dominated by just a single moss, living alone. What are the conditions that foster diverse communities rather than isolated individuals? The question is very complex for mosses, let alone for humans.

-Gathering Moss, ROBIN WALL KIMMERER

WHAT SCARES US IN RELATIONSHIPS? AND IN COLLECTIVES?

SECOND COURSE:

SANDY POTATOES AND COLESLAW

FROM THE "HUNGRY FOR PEACE" COOKBOOK

Blankets were spread on the grass, with items that you could just take if you wanted. I got a couple of books and some seed potatoes for the garden. Then I grabbed a plate and joined a few of the older folks on a bench. "Isn't this wonderful?"

A woman asked me. I nodded, mouth full. "It's so nice to see young people doing something good with their lives. It makes me think there's still hope for this crazy world." "Mmm Hmm," I replied. "That's the best thing about it." The simple act of sharing is a powerful force. It is the opposite of greed. It exposes the lie of scarcity and necessary deprivation. If we can do away with greed, we will do away with hunger, poverty and war. Greed will not be wished out of existence, but we can shove it out with the practice of radical, public sharing. This book is a map, not the actual road. Take it and blaze your own trail to a better world. Let your dreams guide you and your heart always have the final say. If you do the best you can with whatever you have, you WILL find your way. Thirty years ago, that was just a bold belief, now I know it's true. Have a good time, bon voyage. . . and thank you.

-JO SWANSON in the introduction to the book

HOW CAN WE REDISTRIBUTE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY?