

Rupert Fike

HOME ECONOMICS

My summer of eternal blueberries ends
when they hit four dollars a half-pint
which comes to a buck-fifty each morning
(not to mention the air freight ozone damage).
Their bed of granola isn't cheap either
because I demand the boutique maple blend
slathered in pricey Greek yogurt, a breakfast
proactive in raging against the night.

To stay strong I avoid the berry aisle,
even consider grief counseling for
the loss of their antioxidant benefits
(proven with rats) that added a smug skip
to my overcaffeinated step—
super-foods were in me, fighting the fight.
But now oxidizing free radicals
can attach themselves like river leeches
to my defenseless cell nodes.
Preventable aging will set in, what
no amount of red wine drinking can help.
Yet I try, for my body is my temple,
and I've found a nice locally sourced Malbec.

Winter mornings now bring oatmeal, so dull,
though the words *organic*, *Kansas*, and *steel-cut* help.
Plus, calling it *porridge* adds a tasteful Brit touch.
And at two dollars a pound, this comes
to eighteen cents per each morning's bowl
(with colonic and cholesterol benefits).
The worst part of oatmeal, though, is having
to stand there, watch the pot while it cooks.

It can't boil over or stick to the bottom.
You have to stir. Be present in the moment.
You cannot multi-task while cooking oats.
Bad things involving a Chore Girl may occur.

An Indian physician friend tells me,
"The key to good health is ignoring it."
She makes her own Chai tea each morning,
first chopping ginger (free from her yard)
onto cardamom pods, spices, Earl Grey bags.
And only then does she boil the water
so the pour will come from freshly excited
molecules whose active steeping creates
those most-centered wafts that anoint her day.
Not that I'm saying *Eastern ways good,*
Western ways bad. That's so annoying.
It's just this: I could never finely
chop anything before coffee.
And I want eternal youth on the cheap.
There's not much more to it than that.

