

# How to Cook

Todd Osborne

Step 1: Don't be so speckled-egg dull.  
Rome took years to cook all the way through,  
but they burnt out with panache and grace,  
and a ring of smoke around each face.  
Cooking takes time and patience. Its pockets  
are deep and floury, ready to be made.

Step 2: Don't drink too much lemonade.  
If you must, stick to something that will dull  
taste buds, maybe something hidden in the pockets  
your apron contains. If you throw  
a tantrum or toss the dough to the ceiling, facetious  
or not, you wouldn't want your clothes disgraced,

or spoiled—the meat the butcher gave, ungraceful  
now, maggoty and unfit to be made,  
basted, boiled, baked, breaded, or otherwise defaced:  
a natural reminder that even a task as dull  
as refrigeration can be missed, not thought-through  
like the tailor who hems a sleeve but forgets the pocket.

Step 3: It's okay to microwave. Think Hot Pockets.  
Think clean lines and flaky outer shell—a grace  
your tongue receives. It accepts pepperoni and is through  
for the rest of the day, scalded, chastened like the maid  
who fears her boss's anger, or a patterned dull  
snake whose charmer can no longer face

the world and leaves it to rest in its basket, faced  
with the prospect of inertia and a single pocket  
of air and light. Step 4: Your knives should not be dull  
like you, who can barely read a recipe—symbols a thin grace.  
Everything cooked must first be unmade,  
so why weep for something that has gone through

all this before? There's no fault in carving through  
chicken like snowboarding mountain faces.  
Don't mourn (Step 5?) the world we have made  
—the savage and savaging we try to hide in our pockets  
will fall through its holes. No grace  
in that, no hope to be anything but beaten-down, dull.

If nothing will be made, there's always drive-thru.  
Pull up, take bag and cup from dull face.  
Your pockets are empty. Say grace.

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