

**WITH OR WITHOUT BREAD**  
food memoirs

**SARABANDE WRITING LABS, VOL. 3**

# SARABANDE WRITING LABS

An Arts Education Program from Sarabande Books

Sarabande Writing Labs is an arts education program serving under-resourced communities in Kentucky through creative writing workshops.

## OUR MISSION

- **REACH** communities in Kentucky with traditionally fewer arts education opportunities.
- **TEACH** creative writing workshops characterized by enthusiasm and excellence.
- **CREATE** opportunities for positive, experiential learning in a supportive and respectful environment.
- **PROMOTE** diverse voices through free community readings.

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**WITH OR WITHOUT BREAD**



# WITH OR WITHOUT BREAD

You get used to cold pizza  
with warm soda

You get used to Ramen noodles  
half cooked

You get used to leftovers  
from the dinner you didn't eat

You get used to bologna and cheese  
with or without bread

You get used to ravioli  
straight out of the can

You get used to feeling sick  
when you think about eating

You get used to not eating  
when you just want another drink

*Jeanette Young*

# CHOCOLATE PUDDING PIE

The woman who loves chocolate pudding pie appears out of reach. She looks elegant. She has a bold, firm appearance, yet she can easily disintegrate. She's known to be sweet, smooth, and surprising. She can knock you off your feet. She knows a romance with her is going to be an exciting ride. She has many sides: smooth, dark and rocky at times. She holds many forms and holds her head high. She keeps her body covered in a simple light, only to be wild and crazy inside.

*Christina Shaltry*



# LOVE + NACHOS

The kids attempted to make Mommy's morning cheese chips & an ice cold Coke. Brought it to me in bed with my nacho/taco sauce. We watched *Coach* together – Craig was nowhere to be found. So wonderful, not healthy but lovely & a complete surprise. Avery brought it up on a tray with a flower in a glass.

*Julie Fithian*

# PIGS FEET

Step 1: Thoroughly wash the pigs feet.

*Ms. Denise is like a second mother to me. She is my best friend's mother. Her personality is one of a kind. She is moody but full of love and cooks like a champ.*

Step 2: Boil the pigs feet and get the junk off.

*Her kitchen is in her tri-level house up top, and it smells so good. Tan walls and simmering pots, empty sinks, soap & bleach waiting to one side.*

Step 3: Rinse and add more water and onions.

*She taught me how to make the pigs feet taste better. This was two years ago, when I first started my transition from male to female.*

Step 4: Season the feet, let boil approximately 25 hours.

*Pigs feet when cooked properly are slightly sticky but soft & fall off the bones. I feel so good when I cook pigs feet.*

Step 6: Enjoy.

*Rara Stoute*

# PARADISE

Me and my best friend went to Paradise  
had breakfast

had salem cakes  
fry apple  
hashbrown and

one  
    silver  
        dollar

*Nicole Tyler*

# CANDIED YAMS

Step 1: Cook 6 yams in a large pot. Do not peel the yams until they are done. When tender stick a fork in them.

*My mother taught me how to prepare candied yams. She cooked with lots of love and care. She always wore an apron and was very clean. She always said clean as you go.*

Step 2: Remove them from top of stove and the water and drain.

*My mother cooked a full course meal every day. She made candied yams on Sunday, and she always prepared her Sunday dinner on Saturday night. She prepped everything late Saturday evening.*

Step 3: Use a knife (small) to peel off the skin of the yams.

*I used to assist, placing everything she was going to prepare out on the kitchen table. My mother always kept dishes and pots and pans after each meal, so the kitchen was always clean.*

Step 4: Slice yams in a baking dish.

*I was in my early teens when I learned this recipe and helped my mother prepare it. It was in the fall of the year.*

Step 5: Slice 2 sticks of butter sparingly on the yams (to taste).

*Candied yams are delicious with kale or any collard greens or cherry or even spinach. It's good with roast beef or fried chicken. The yams melt in your mouth and blend well with the accompanying foods.*

Step 6: Sprinkle Splenda (powder or packets) sparingly to taste over the yams.

*It was was peaceful and quiet in the house. My sister was on the porch, ready, and my mother and I were in the kitchen.*

Step 7: Sprinkle two tablespoons of cinnamon & two tablespoons of nutmeg over the yams, and place them in the oven on 350 for 45 minutes.

*My mother always hummed a spiritual when she cooked. It was soothing and made me feel safe and comfortable, eating the yams on Sunday evening after church.*

*Carol Pleasants*

# PUMPKIN PIE

The woman who loves pumpkin pie wears socks and no shoes one day and spices it up with heels the next. She loves to spread her joy and happiness. She has been known to talk a lot. She never wants to lose what she has achieved in her newfound romance. She knows her recovery is a continuing process. She creates new ways to enjoy each day with her children, playing movie stars with their dolls. She prefers love over hate because she has been filled with too much pain already. She prefers not to let her past haunt her anymore. She is growing into the mother her daughter deserves and the queen her husband needs—him coming home to a sweet home-cooked meal, pumpkin pie and all.

*Anna Cole*

# SWEET POTATO PIE

The woman who loves sweet potato pie bakes on Sundays and holidays. She is barefoot, dancing around the kitchen, windows open and radio playing. Mama is singing as she sets out the things she needs. Always said *You put your foot in it*. Never let me taste it in bowl—not till she was done. Said *Never to try to cut it while it's hot*. But when it was still a little warm she put ice cream on top and let it run down the sides.

*Jean Kersey*

# YOU GET USED TO

no ketchup for french fries  
no McDonald's Apple Pies  
    You get used to  
no T-bone steaks  
    no dinner dates

You get used to  
    chicken, turkey, eggs  
chicken, turkey, eggs  
    you know what I mean?

You get used to bagels  
    "no cream cheese"  
6:30, 11:30, 5:30 meal bells or do I say  
    "knocks" on your door

You get used to fruit flies galore  
    you get used to  
        this  
    you get used to  
        that

You get used to recovery as a matter  
                                    of fact

Thank you Lord  
    I'm getting used to Wayside & my sisters:  
                                    The Recovery Pact!

*Monica Threatts*



# COOKIE SHEET OF LOVE

The best breakfast I ever had was toast cut in four squares, a glass of Strawberry Quik milk, and a banana. This was the first breakfast my daughter Suzie ever made me. She brought it in to my bedroom on a cookie sheet with a cup full of clovers & dandelions she had just picked. She was five years old, and it was Mother's Day. She had prepared everything by herself just for me.

*Priscilla Shannon*

# THE FAMILY WE WERE

You get used to eating cottage cheese and fruit when you really want cereal before bed each night.

You get used to making something different for each child when they're all four picky.

You get used to trying new disgusting wildlife like rabbit, turtle, & squirrel when you're with a country boy.

You get used to microwave scrambled eggs when your little girls wake up to cook you Mother's Day breakfast.

And then, sometimes—  
you get used to delicious fresh veggies when your sons decide they won't eat them from a can.

*Susan Philyaw*

# ANNIE

My Aunt Annie taught me how to make pork chops with gravy and onions. She's a beautiful and loving woman and it showed in her food. She had a kind heart. Annie wore a blue shirt and blue pants. She moved quietly and at a good speed for her age. We were always in her kitchen after she got off work. I was maybe 10 years old. Me and my Aunt Annie had a nice bond because my mommy was not there, so she taught the things I needed to learn—being a female and how to take care of myself. She inspired me to become the cook and woman I am today. The dish we shared at dinnertime was good. The meat was tender. The gravy was nice and creamy, and I slopped it up with bread.

*Danaelle Moody*

# HELLO DOLLY PIE

The woman who loves Hello Dolly Pie likes to sit by a babbling brook, with the wind on her face, listening to the sounds of nature sing. Her favorite pie has several layers of chocolaty goodness as she has many layers of goodness. As she takes bite after bite, the feeling of happiness grows as does her waistline!

*Sallie Rutherford*

# SWEET POTATO PIE

The woman who loves sweet potato pie is smart, loving, and understanding. Quick to be nice but hard to keep tamed. She loves to help others. She has been known to snap when pushed to the limit. She would never let people steal her joy. She knows there is a higher power working on her behalf to do for her what she can't do for herself. She creates clothes because it's her passion. She prefers for things to stay the same. She prefers not to meet new people because they always end up leaving her life. The woman who loves sweet potato pie wears bright things to accent her personality. The sweet potato pie lover doesn't mind when people don't like how she dresses or her attitude, because that's how she is and no man can change it.

*Martina Nettles*

# POTATO SALAD

My beautiful mom taught me how to make this dish. From a child, I have always loved her potato salad. When I moved to Louisville I missed that dish. I had to call her and ask her how to make it. After all those years, she walked me step by step through preparing the dish. I remember watching her prepare potato salad, but never really paid direct attention. I just wanted the finished product. She used to have the kitchen going. Pots boiling, chopper running, plenty of bowls & spoons. Once she finished, I was ready to eat. However, this is a cold dish so when it was ready my mom would let us know. We would always grab a plate and a fork and dig in. It was cold and creamy, but just right. Potatoes not too soft or hard. Everything, all ingredients were perfectly distributed, and, in each spoonful, you could taste it all. I was happy and satisfied each time I ate this meal. Now I think I make it to perfection!

*Donna Chew*

# LEMON MERINGUE PIE

The woman who loves lemon meringue pie is kind, caring, and thoughtful. She doesn't like grass to grow under her feet and has a sweet and tart attitude. She loves to give roses and take vacations, OH! and she's a great cook. She likes to write in her journal, put her feet up and hear soft jazz, visit her garage, pull out that mountain bike and take a ride down to the river.

*Catherine Daniels*

# KEY LIME PIE

The woman who loves key lime pie  
is one of a kind  
she's always on time—  
there at the drop of a dime  
she is the pendulum that strikes his chime  
never got caught committing a crime  
my oh my, ain't she fine.

*Carol Branch*



# WHAT YOU WANT

You get used to having a meal on the table.

May not be what you want  
but you always have a meal.

You get used to eating eggs at Wayside  
every morning  
but it's a meal.

You get used to having your food stamp, so that

once

each

month

you can go shopping  
and get whatever you want.

*Linda Williams*

# CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER PIE

The woman who loves chocolate peanut butter pie is me. I remember eating it out of the container until it was gone and letting my precious lick the spoon, so creamy smooth like my skin and so rich like actors, like all dogs like peanut butter—they lick and lick until it goes down their throat just like going down a slide in a park, and the chocolate runs down like a river in the woods.

*Toni Hood*

# GIRL SCOUT SPAGHETTI

Step 1: Cook noodles.

*Radoma Archer, my Girl Scout leader, helped us with our cooking merit badge. She had long blond hair and ocean blue eyes. She was chunky and very kind.*

Step 2: Cook hamburger meat.

*We were at a camp—can't recall the name but the cabins were wooden and surrounded by trees. I loved the sounds of nature as we cooked outside over the large fire pit.*

Step 3: Drain noodles. Drain meat.

*I was about twelve and was going a lot of camping with Girl Scouts and on field trips to museums and aquariums .I learned to star gaze and track animals in the woods canoeing and fishing.*

Step 4: Add sugar to meat.

*We made it with sugar so it was sweeter than normal spaghetti. It was piping hot, right out of the fire pit and tasted so good.*

Step 5: Stir and simmer meat & sauce together. Serve and eat.

*We all sung camp fire songs after we ate and told scary stories until it was dark and get afraid to be outside. This was a very good time in my life.*

*La'Shanda Riley*

# SWEET POTATO PIE

Step 1: Boil potatoes and peel them.

*My great grandma was in her early 100s. She was a happy person, wore a flower-like dress and an apron—as sweet as pie. She would hum gospel songs while she worked.*

Step 2: Add sugar, milk, eggs & flour.

*The kitchen was white; her house was in the country. It was quiet—a clean kitchen, no one else around. When the window was open, the kitchen smelled like the garden outside.*

Step 4: Add brown sugar & cinnamon.

*I was about 12 or a little older.*

Step 5: Then put it in the oven to brown.

*Sweet potato pie was the first dish I made, and it tasted very good—hot, sweet, kind of sticky. It was a*

*nice hot day in the country. I felt good 'cause it was my first time baking that pie.*

Step 6: Enjoy the pie with my great grandma.

*Joyce Gaffney*

# THE ICE BOX BAFFLES

You get used to checking dates and the mandatory “smell check” when you’ve had rotten or spoiled products but nothing to eat.

You get used to sharing anything with anybody when it comes to food.

You get used to keeping several cans of biscuits when “Monkey Bread” is your specialty.

You get used to quick and easy when there are children to feed: microwave mandatory.

You get used to sitting at the table, looking at the cabinets, the pantry, trying to make it last.

*Lisa M. LaCroix*

# KENTUCKY DERBY PIE

Kentucky Pie is much like pecan pie. Instead use walnuts, add chocolate chips. So yummy, my oh my!

The woman who loves Kentucky Derby Pie adores her home state! She loves to write and cook. She really loves to create.

She loves to laugh, to learn, to grow—sharing words and food with those she does and does not know.

She shops at farmer's markets, does lots of crock-pot cooking. She and her man dance silly, especially when no one's looking.

The woman who loves Kentucky Derby Pie wears jeans, comfortable shirts, no shoes. She doesn't mind when at Scrabble does she lose.

Her open heart, as big as gold, grows bigger as she grows old, and she prefers her Derby Pie à la mode!

*Sherry Ball*

# CHOCOLATE MERINGUE PIE

The woman who loves chocolate meringue pie loves to be bold like toasty whipped topping. She's been known to stand in confidence in a crowd of people and hold her head high. She would never turn away from a friend starving for her advice. She creates a fluffy outer layer that allows her to be easily approached. On the inside, her heart is rich with lots to offer.

*Jessica Jones*

# THE WOMAN WHO LOVES CHOCOLATE CREAM PIE

Laverne loves chocolate cream pie, loves to shop, very outgoing. A people person, putting a smile on people's faces, doing whatever I can to stay focused helping other people. I would never hurt a person; I'm very kind hearted. I do love the person that I became. I do know how to take care of me today. I prefer to love, but other times I prefer not to be bothered, too. Alone, I let you in. Though a lot of the time I don't want to. I get so tired of being hurt.

*Laverne Myers*



# ALL SMILES

The last breakfast with my son  
was pancakes, cheese, and eggs

Never thought it would be  
our last  
But for some odd reason  
that day was a blast

Laughing and making jokes  
Talking about his future, I had  
such high hopes

I picture his smile, it's  
etched in my heart forever  
on file

*Felicia Kidd*

# THE SUMMER CUCUMBER COTTAGE SALAD

Step 1: Cut up tomatoes, onions & cucumbers.

*A good friend, "Shell" Waters, taught me to make this salad. She's a very sweet, shy girl, normally.*

Step 2: Put tub of cottage cheese in a bowl and ranch dressing to your taste.

*This dish is more of a seasonal dish. It's better in the summer when the tomatoes and cucumbers are fresh.*

Step 3: Mix in the cucumbers tomatoes & onions

*We were at her house in Meade Co. having a huge cook-out – lots of food fun family-n-friends. Shell was in a silly mood, out of her "shell" that day.*

*Billie Jo Martin*

# OUR FAVORITE BREAKFAST

When my children were small and my husband was still living and a minister, every Sunday before church we had what we called our favorite breakfast. Scrambled eggs, cheese, bacon, blueberry muffins. I always felt happy. My husband has been deceased for 19 years, but thinking of those Sunday mornings makes me happy.

*Renee Johnson*

# GREEN EGGS & WHAT ... ?

I love this place – although  
The food is not that great  
Sometimes I wonder what is being put on my plate  
The eggs sometimes look green  
Breakfast is certainly not fit for a queen  
I have definitely lost a little weight  
Just can't eat what is on that plate  
How I miss bagels and cream cheese  
Will someone get me one ASAP PLEASE

*Shawn Marvel*

# APPLE PIE

The woman who loves apple pie prefers cran-apples. Homemade apple pie is like chocolate melting in your mouth. She loves to pick the apples from the tree, then off to the kitchen she goes. It's like a nice day at the park, like music in her ears, in her own little world. She doesn't mind all the peeling. She loves the summer weather and the whipped cream that comes along. The silent wind that brushes the tree that calms her down. She wears her shorts and t-shirt—that comfortable, just like the apple tree.

*Mary McKune*

# SWEET POTATO PIE

The woman who loves sweet potato pie is tasty and full of flavor. She enjoys the good life, always willing to help anyone out. Enjoy her while you can because the sweet potato pie lover only stays around long enough to make a difference in your life. The woman who loves sweet potato pie wears her heart on her sleeve. She doesn't mind when she makes a mistake, always adding in more ingredients to make herself better.

*Michelle Starling*

# YOU GET USED TO

flavored tums

pointy chips tearing my gums

Strawberry Quik

full from liquids

first Twix I could chew after five years

soft foods

*Shannon Westrick*

# LEMON PIE

My lemon pie is the best  
Can't get enough and can't rest

You got to know it's all gone  
Before you even want to go home

But you will be back another day  
and the first thing you are going to say

*grandma, where's the pie, or I'm going to say goodbye,  
call me when it's done—I want to be  
the person to eat the first one*

*Karen Robinson*



# THANKFUL TO BE AROUND

I was with my grandchildren.  
They were all around the table  
with sleep in their eyes, with  
their forks and spoons ready  
while I stood over the stove  
scrambling fast only to hear  
after I was done *Grandma*  
*these eggs are hard*. It was  
funny and oh so sweet because  
I was there to fix my grandchildren  
something to eat.

*Carla Johnson*

# BLACKBERRY PIE

The woman who loves blackberry pie is strong, is never wrong. Loves to get out into those fields to pick those blackberries in her apron. Grandma takes all day to bake the pie—just as long to chop that wood for the cast iron stove. Oh, the smell of that hot blackberry pie! I sit at a small wooden table, ready, oh so ready, for that blackberry pie.

*Tina Gentry*

# BREAKFAST AT NIGHT

My family and I had breakfast at night. I fixed bacon, sausage, eggs, grits, biscuits, juice, coffee, Pepsi. It was 12am. Everyone got up. Debra, Harold, Robert, Stan. We bonded and laughed 'til we got full and went to sleep. Everyone thanked me and parted ways. I felt good and didn't wash dishes. We all slept in.

*Tina Knight*

