

From Morning Songs: The Art of Making Soup

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The art of making soup is alchemy

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Making soup is alchemy— a brew made from the elements where fire, earth, air and water mingle to concoct a potion that if seasoned well can hypnotize the senses with its taste and nourishment. The mysteries of soup cannot be taught by passing down a recipe of measurements. It's more than slicing onions to be sizzled with cut carrots, celery, green peppers then sautéed until their essence bleeds and shines translucent from the heat. It's more than elements simmering in the stock or water stirred with a wooden spoon— much more than seasoning that anyone can take and shake into a pot like words that make up sentences but lacks the poetry that words can send into the ear and through the nerves of those who can hear the magic sound. You cannot teach the imagination how a pinch of this, a pinch of that tasted with a searching tongue in the darkness of closed eyes can reach beyond aromas rising in the air and know it's getting near where smell and taste and breathing meet to capture in the mouth what passion knows. There is no language for the taste of soup reaching deep inside where words can't reach to soothe, caress, and rip away indifference. Making soup is art— like mixing colors on the palate that bring red flowers to the canvas, and huge green mountains in the distance blending into the bright blue skies where white clouds look so soft you want to join them in their journey over forests and deep seas. Who knows why this brew made from leaves and roots and bones, ladled into bowls and lifted with a spoon into the mouth to touch the tongues of hungry souls can nourish and delight and bring back memories from a time long ago where soup was sipped in circles around a fire-- smoke rising like a spirit high into the darkness, lips smiling at the taste and at each other.