

Research Note

Pickled Eggs and Natural Dyes: Food as Active Memory

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Abstract:

Food and grief are often closely connected. Many people prepare favorite foods of passed loved ones as part of a healing process—a way to remember. Re-creating beloved recipes can help bring memories to life. But how can we re-create those memories in the kitchen while also learning to live without the individuals we've lost? I argue that sometimes, to navigate grief, discovering new cooking techniques can help the mourning process. In an interview conducted in 2021 with Toronto resident Gaïa Orain, I learned how she began to pickle eggs using natural dyeing techniques as a coping mechanism for the death of her mother. While Gaïa's mother was an avid cook, pickling eggs was not her recipe. It was something Gaïa learned on her own and has since come to embody her mother's essence and a way for Gaïa to actively remember and honor her while simultaneously developing a sense of autonomy.

Keywords:

grief, memory, pickled eggs, natural dyes, family, nostalgia

How can we recreate and honor the memory of someone we love who has died while simultaneously learning how to live without them? How can we move forward without forgetting their presence in our lives? The answers to these difficult questions may be as numerous and varied as the people asking. For some people, memories of loved ones are manifested and embodied through the act of preparing and making food. Jillian Gould writes: "Our kitchen stories connect us to one another; the memories and narratives we share can be just as powerful as the food itself" (2017: 105). This research note reflects on how food has helped my friend, Gaïa Orain, find answers as she grieves the loss of her mother.

Gaïa Orain was born on April 27, 1986. After finishing high school in London, Ontario, she moved to Montréal in the early 2000s and then to New York City to complete her MFA in Product Design from the School of Visual Arts. After living most of her adult life outside of Ontario, she decided to return to the province, to Toronto, a couple of years following the death of her mother, Véronique Orain. I hadn't seen Gaïa for several years, so her moving to Toronto was a welcome surprise for me. When she moved into an apartment around the corner from me, our renewed friendship was partly founded on a shared sense of loss. Gaïa was mourning her mother, while I was grieving the end of a relationship and had recently been laid off from a job. I was pushing my way through Toronto's crowded streetcars and busy sidewalks, and with each shaky step, I remember feeling like I was exposing my loneliness and vulnerable state to everyone around me. Thanks to Gaïa, however, those dark days were interrupted with many evenings of bright and heartfelt conversation,

radiant colors, and delicious food. As she turned to the kitchen to find her path forward, she helped identify the way out of grief for me as well.

When we reconnected, Gaia was still reeling from the death of her mother, Véronique. Born in Rheims, France, Véronique moved to London, Ontario in 1984 and it is here that she died at home in 2016. Gaia describes her as a woman who had an “appreciation for color... velvet and purple, Harlequin romance and drama... that kind of stuff, you know?” (Orain, 2021). She was also an excellent cook. Gaia remembers that she “took great pleasure in spending hours in the kitchen. She would listen to French music... and, I just remember she’d be in the kitchen for hours on end and be quite content there. And was really invested in the process and knowing materials, and also had a confidence of things” (Orain, 2021).

Her description of her mother as sensuous and tactile, and self-assured and comfortable in the kitchen, is not far off from how I would describe Gaia. The memories of her mother in the kitchen actively live and weave themselves into how she exists in the very same space. Whether intentional, learned, or in active response to her loss, Gaia uses her love of cooking and design to maintain a connection with her mother who is no longer here. That this a grieving process is undeniable. Although Gaia says that “grief” sounds “so sad” (Orain, 2021), it is present here and Gaia’s experiences show how grieving can take on multiple meanings and behaviors, some of which celebrate life’s vibrancy and joy as much as mourning its loss.

Part of Gaia’s grieving process is to actively remember her mother through cooking. This involves spending time in the kitchen, sometimes preparing the foods they loved together, while at other times trying new recipes that her mother would almost certainly have enjoyed. Through making food, Gaia connects with, activates, and maintains her mother’s playful essence and the relationship they shared as mother and daughter. The kitchen is one of the places where she remembers her mother most vividly, and it is also a space in which Gaia feels most at home. Like her mother, Gaia moves with ease in the kitchen.

One of the foods Gaia creates in order to feel close to her mother is pickled eggs. Gaia’s recipe for naturally dyed pickled eggs is based on traditional pickling methods, but the natural dyeing agents are her own additions, and they are not consistent. The steps to making her colorful pickled eggs are embedded throughout this research note as representative markers of how food is intrinsic to narrative. Both food and narrative are shaped through actively acknowledging memory as an ongoing and evolving process.



Photo 1. Pink pickled eggs with fresh herbs. Toronto, January 2022. Photo by Gaïa Orain. Used with permission.

The first step is as follows:

So, pickled eggs: I prefer jammy in the middle, so... [you can] get them a week old, or get them fresh... I think the jury is kind of out on that, if you get eggs that are a week old, fantastic. And then you want to bring your pot to a boil and then plop them all in. And I set my timer for nine minutes. Eight can be too jammy, ten can be too stiff. So, you boil your eggs for nine minutes and as soon as the timer is off you chill them. (Orain, 2021)

While a tiny space in her one-bedroom Harbord Street apartment, the kitchen is immaculately equipped with a gas stove, shelves upon shelves of mason jars full of vibrant powders and textures, kitschy glass- and cooking-ware, and freshly cut flowers everywhere in multiple vases. She invited me for snacks and wine shortly after she arrived in Toronto, so I came over with a bottle of my favorite Spanish red and she provided the rest. This was also the first time I tried her pickled eggs.

I am trying to remember my initial impressions of the dish as I write this. I can visualize vivid jewel tones: hard-boiled eggs with fuchsia exteriors, golden egg yolks. A blob of velvety-yellow curried mayo on the side of the plate, for dipping. They were perfectly salty and sour and paired unusually yet deliciously with the Spanish Tempranillo. And, perhaps what was most memorable, and certainly most striking, was the presentation: bright pink eggs presented on blue and purple serving plates, illuminated by a few soft lights in the apartment. Night had just fallen as I sat at the little kitchen table, drinking wine from my comedically-large glass goblet, watching Gaïa whip up more plates of cheeses, hummus, and endives for us to savour.

Barthes writes that, “food serves as a sign not only for themes, but also for situations; and this, all told, means for a way of life that is emphasized, much more than expressed, by it” (Barthes, 1961/2013: 28). Gaïa was introduced to pickled eggs not by her biological mother, but by her stepmother, Barbara Ackerman. It was 2018, shortly after Gaïa moved to Toronto. Having lived in New York and Montréal for most of her adult life, away from family, her relationship with Barbara was still developing. But Gaïa noticed that “[we] both connected well in the kitchen” (Orain, 2021) and that their shared love of cooking brought them closer together. They were each preparing to attend separate New Year’s Eve events and Gaïa was looking for gluten-free snack options to bring to her friend’s party. Growing up in a Jewish family, Barbara’s cooking style was influenced by pickling traditions and incorporating savoury flavours into her meals, so she suggested that they try their hands at pickled eggs.

Step Two:

So, you run them under cold water until everything is cool and then immediately crack them so that the water can help separate them from the shell... you crack it, but you don’t remove the shell so that the water can get between the egg and the shell membrane. There’s something about the chilling that helps... I guess when you’re heating a hot thing, cold water contracting... something around that makes sense.

And then I let those hang out in the fridge or the freezer if there’s space but there usually isn’t, for not a timed amount. Then I’m preparing the brine.
(Orain, 2021)

Gaïa had never made pickled eggs before, but when she Googled “pickled eggs,” she realized that she could incorporate natural dyes and colors into the recipe, turning the traditional pub treat into something that is also aesthetically delightful. As a textile artist with a background in design, she recognized an opportunity to incorporate colors and textures into a seemingly simple recipe, and a chance to connect with her stepmother and get playful while in the kitchen. It was also an opportunity for her to embody the memory of her mother’s essence in the place that she and Véronique love so much: the kitchen.

Growing up with a French mother, Gaïa did not encounter pickled eggs as part of the Orain household menu. Rather, Gaïa remembers her mother producing French-inspired dishes, such as leek pizza. Actually, Véronique’s leek pizza was not pizza at all, at least from a traditional, Italian perspective. It was made from phyllo pastry, caramelized leeks, feta cheese, pine nuts, sundried tomatoes, olives, and herbs de Provence. According to Gaïa it is important not to scrimp on the herbs de Provence; she warns not to buy the “cheapy stuff, for two dollars, [because] there’s probably no lavender in it” (Orain, 2021). Gaïa tells me that she never liked leeks as a child so her mom created this tart that she called “pizza” to entice her to eat it. Her enticement worked because Gaïa has been eating and making it ever since.

Gaïa regularly makes a leek tart with her godmother, Ann Harley, although she has made several modifications. For example, she substitutes the heaps of butter for a healthier choice of olive oil and switches phyllo for gluten-free flatbread. Ann was one of Véronique's best friends and when Gaïa and Ann get together they make the dish and share anecdotes and stories of Gaïa's mother. They actively remember Véronique by recreating one of her favorite foods while simultaneously enjoying and reliving some of her experiences. Food and narratives intertwine. Gaïa reflects, "I think it's something people always forget about grief, is that, telling people about the person they lost is really wonderful. I don't know all the ways in which she lived. I have a perspective on my experiences as a child but, I love hearing about how she showed up as a friend or remembering what they had" (Orain, 2021). At the same time, Ann and Gaïa's relationship strengthens as they share their personal memories about Véronique during the process of making and eating one of her dishes. She is embodied in the familiar taste and stories. In this process of remembering and recreating a meal, Véronique's energy is ignited and felt deeply by both.

Gaïa explains how difficult it was to record her mother's recipes, including the one for leek pizza, because she never used traditional measurement methods. Instead, the making of a dish was embedded in a sensory process and in her surroundings. Gaïa says, "chasing my mom for her details was always hard, like... this *gloop* of this and a *handful* of that, we get them from *this place*..." (Orain, 2021). Her approach echoes David Sutton's description of his research participant Georgia Vourneli cooking in her Greek kitchen: "At no point in the process does she employ measuring spoons or cups. In this case the ingredients themselves become 'tools' and perform the role of 'measuring' other ingredients. In a *sense the use of ingredients as tool can be seen as part of the structuring of the cooking environment itself as a mnemonic, or memory-jog*" (2013: 309-10). Although Gaïa playfully mimics her mother's use of phonetic sounds or vague descriptive words to verbally represent recipe measurements, she often utilizes similar language when describing how to make her pickled eggs. She declares, "I'm not one to measure things but I'll eyeball the vessel that I'm going to pickle in and then imagine that half of it will be occupied by eggs, and then that's how much liquid I need, which is half white vinegar, half water, and then a good handful of Kosher salt or rock salt..." (Orain, 2021).

Perhaps Gaïa learned this sensory technique from her mother or perhaps she has a natural aversion to measuring, but for whatever reason, like her mother, she now relies on tactile memory to create and describe familiar recipes. This mirrors Jillian Gould's experience of watching her mother and grandmother cook. For things they made regularly, recipes were not written down but "embodied" (Gould 2017: 104). Similarly, Gaïa and her mother's embodiment of their recipes have meant that over the years these dishes came to represent much more to them than mere food or sustenance. For mother and daughter, the act or process of preparing food is primary. Their confident method of making food without needing to write down recipes draws on both their corporeal and emotional memories. Each time Gaïa reaches for a "handful" of salt or "eyeballs" how much vinegar she will need, she physically and emotionally remembers her mother's way of making food. There is no need for tablespoons or cups because the recipe is engrained within her mnemonic storage space, and those memories charge and flourish each time she whips out another carton of eggs. As she mixes herbs and spices into her pickling brine, she also unconsciously

observes her mother in their old kitchen in London, Ontario, listening to French music, excitedly and gracefully losing herself in the process of cooking.

Step three:

I'm not one to measure things but I'll eyeball the vessel that I'm going to pickle in and then imagine that half of it will be occupied by eggs, and then that's how much liquid I need, which is half white vinegar, half water, and then a good handful of Kosher salt or rock salt... and I've never really measured but I'll ask myself, what do I have on hand?

So, if I have beets... now I have a bit of a witch's cabinet full of weird things, so I have beet flour, I have pea flower which is the flower that makes things blue... I've used hibiscus or sorrel that can also make really bright colors... people might shy away from it, but it doesn't really impact the taste because what you're tasting is salt and vinegar, and there's also going to be pickling spices.
(Orain, 2021)

Symbolism not only affects how people perceive events, it influences their actions (Jones, 2011: 4). Pickled eggs were not something that Véronique made or consumed. Rather, she typically preferred the traditional dishes of her French homeland. However, for Gaïa, the playfulness of making brightly colored pickled eggs, from sourcing natural dyes to navigating how to create the boldest shade of burgundy with purple carrots (Orain, 2021), embodies her mother's whimsical and epicurean qualities. It is the dyeing process that is perhaps more significant to Gaïa than the pickling because it provides an opportunity to channel her mother's energy and exercise her artistic abilities and playfulness into the recipe. The dyed eggs are symbolic of her mother's sensorial and curious approach to life and the joy that she actively sought while in the kitchen. Gaïa manifests such sensibilities each time she makes and shares a new batch of pickled eggs with her loved ones.

The experience of preparing, eating, and sharing the recipe for pickled eggs generates and solidifies an ongoing connection with her mother. When Gaïa was growing up, the act of cooking—whether it was watching or participating in the kitchen—bonded her with her mother. It was a connective, interactive force that strengthened their relationship. While Véronique is no longer physically present there remain foods, such as Gaïa's pickled eggs, that symbolize and manifest her bright and generous energy, morphing and modifying into deep jewel tones with the care and changing ingredients that Gaïa pours into each batch. And for Gaïa, pickled eggs are “something I make to share or to delight” (Orain, 2021). They are meant to be eaten with other people, a way to connect and share experiences.

Other than eating them with Gaïa, the only time I can remember seeing pickled eggs was in small pubs in England and at one bar in Toronto called The Communist's Daughter. I spent a significant amount of time in that place, yet I never ordered a pickled egg off the menu. I always opted for a bag of chips to go along with my pint. The large, cloudy jar of lifeless eggs that sat behind the bar never appealed to me. Perhaps if the brine had added natural dyeing agents, such as fuchsia beet or blue pea flowers, I would have felt more compelled to

try one. Taking something ordinary, like an egg, out of its usual context evokes intrigue because it's unfamiliar and exciting. A bright pink or lavender hardboiled egg is extraordinary. In many parts of the world, decorating eggs with bright colors and patterns is commonplace. For instance, the Hutsels, the ethno-cultural Ukrainian group that reside in the Carpathian Mountains, have been decorating eggs for centuries (Nepyvoda, 2016). But within a Torontonion, North American context, the oddity of a colorful egg invites curiosity because it is new and unique. It encourages play.

Step four:

My favorite so far has been purple carrots; it makes a beautiful burgundy. And then you can do good old turmeric for yellow eggs but don't get attached to the vessel they're in because it will dye... even metal, and definitely any kind of plastic. And then a hodgepodge of spices I have, a mix of pickling spices... I think like cumin, pepper, and coriander seed, bay leaf, who knows.
(Orain, 2021)

Part of what makes the experience of eating Gaïa's pickled eggs unique is that she intentionally pairs the eggs with matching plates for added aesthetic delight. Laura Shapiro writes about women and cooking at the turn-of-the-century and the dawn of American food magazines. She notes the historical importance of color-coding meals and how cooking-school students in the United States were taught to match everything on the table, from flowers to table decorations to menu items: "Color-coded meals enjoyed a surge of popularity among ambitious home cooks as well as cooking students, and ideas were traded back and forth in the pages of food magazines... color-coordinated meals were praised for being artistic as well as pragmatic" (Shapiro, 1987: 84).

Shapiro argues that to further the creation of a pleasant dining experience, color-coding meals was also a way to take more control of the "messy, unpredictable business of the kitchen" since the "turn-of-the-century kitchen was a matter of guesswork even for the experienced" (1987: 84-85). Gaïa's pickled eggs mirror the pragmatic aesthetics of the early twentieth century woman that Shapiro describes, as she consciously creates color-coded dyes and flavors. However, she embraces the unpredictability of her recipes each time she develops something new in her mind. The uncertainty of the event is part of the process. For her, incorporating play into how she navigates the world and embracing unpredictability is critical. She reflects, "I think [play] is something that we forget to do as we get older. We get really invested in sober aesthetics and performing adulthood that we forget play is intrinsic to... being? The cat still plays, you know?" (Orain, 2021).

Gaïa's playful approach to life is a direct influence from her mother. For example, growing up, Véronique and Gaïa's favorite holiday was "The King's Party," or "La Fête des Rois," a French tradition celebrated on January 6th when people honor the epiphany, or the arrival of the three kings after Jesus' birth. On this day, mother and daughter would engage in "crafts, cake, crêpes, and... hilarity and process, like somebody finds a little porcelain Jesus or who knows what in their cake... you find something in your pie, and you get to take the queen or king with you and then you get to be the ruler for the day" (Orain, 2021). At the

end of that sentence, Gaïa started laughing. For many adults who are not familiar with the tradition, the idea of “becoming the ruler for the day” might sound silly or even uncomfortable. Gaïa probably recognizes this as she nostalgically remembers engaging in the activities with her mother, but it doesn’t stop her from continuing the custom.

Performing and celebrating the King’s Party has had a lasting impression on Gaïa. In our interview, she continued to tell me that while living in Brooklyn, she would throw a “Queen’s Party” for all her female-identifying friends each year. She would serve cheese, decorate her apartment, and carry on many of the traditions that she learned from her mother, such as hiding a fève, or ceramic figurine, in a baked Galette des Rois for her guests to discover. She adapted the premise and traditions of the King’s Parties to create a fun and safe space for the women in her life. While her Brooklyn parties were not mirror reflections of the traditions she and her mother enjoyed in London, Ontario, the underlying theme remained the same: both acted as subversive deviations from the banality of the everyday by indulging in a little bit of cake and folly—because, why not?

Maclean, Russell, and Ryall argue that play is constantly becoming and changing and that it “enacts anything but a stable, authentic state” (2021: 2). Gaïa likes to challenge “the way you’re supposed to navigate things” (Orain, 2021) by incorporating play into her cooking. Colorful eggs, dyed with anything from hibiscus to sorrel to purple carrots create an element of delight. Colorful eggs symbolically challenge and question societal norms in Gaïa’s Canadian context. Dyeing eggs is a tradition in many cultures, such as decorating Easter eggs (or, *Psyanka*) in Ukraine as a spring ritual and to honour nature’s rebirth and with the advent of Christianity, “the rebirth of man” (Nepyvoda, 2016). However, Gaïa’s eggs are not intentionally influenced by such cultural practices. The beautiful colors she creates make seemingly ordinary items (hardboiled eggs) extraordinary, edible objects. After learning about pickling eggs, she realized that she could enhance the recipe by utilizing her background in textiles. She comments, “I thought... this is what I learned in textiles. You know, binding color to a protein with turmeric, paprika, and maybe something else like sumac, or whatever... it was kind of like... textiles 101 dyeing, and you can use vinegar to bind that color” (Orain, 2021). She recognized that she could apply her practical artistic skills to the brine technique, altering the standard pickling ingredients to create something unusual, and perhaps challenging to social culinary norms. I never asked Gaïa if she would ever consider making standard, colorless pickled eggs but I suspect that she might respond by asking what the point of that would be. If you can have something beautiful, something to deviate from life’s seriousness, why take that away? After all, as Gaïa observed, “[one] can tell when life isn’t pleasant because there is less play” (Orain, 2021).

Part of Gaïa’s motivation to generate and incorporate play and humour into her world is to serve as a coping mechanism for her grief. She comments, “it’s also important to find humor and play because death is sad, but death is an essential fact of life... seeking out joyfulness or finding ways for joy... helps me navigate being a human in the world, whether that’s COVID or having a dead mom” (Orain, 2021). When Barbara, Gaïa’s stepmother, first suggested that they make pickled eggs as a New Year’s Eve party snack, Gaïa’s instincts were to see how she could turn the recipe into an event. She wanted the bonding

experience with Barbara to be memorable. I would argue that her desire to add color and creativity to the recipe was Gaïa pulling from remembered experiences in the kitchen with her mother. Perhaps she wanted to recreate the experiences that she shared with Véronique—delightfully moving throughout and playing in the kitchen. Making the experience less informal was perhaps more comfortable for Gaïa, and by doing so she was channelling her mother's energy into the space.

Focusing on dyeing the eggs provided Gaïa a task in the pickling process. Instead of simply watching her stepmom prepare the recipe as she passively followed instructions, she contributed something interesting and meaningful. Most importantly, she invited her mother's spirit into this new experience, helping her to feel less intimidated by the developing relationship with Barbara. Michael Owen Jones writes that food "oftentimes plays a role in nostalgia, carrying or evoking specific memories, not only of the food itself but also of the relationships and contexts associated with it" (Long and Jones, 2017: 7). While the pickled eggs were then new to Gaïa, discovering that she could add vitality to hardboiled eggs through color and natural dyeing processes evoked the vibrant and unprecedented connection she had and continues to have with her mother. The pickling egg process reminds Gaïa of her mother and forces her to pause and actively remember her mother's way of doing things, at the same time it informs both her own navigation in the kitchen and pickling recipe.

To remember, one has to build, or rebuild (Bahloul, 2003: 128). Gaïa's pickled eggs were not her mom's recipe. She learned this tradition through Barbara, who suggested the recipe on a whim, based on her Jewish upbringing and culinary traditions. But "all of [her mother's] behaviours and ways of navigating the kitchen are there... I keep the parts of her that I really appreciate by embodying how she approaches things, even if it's not one of her recipes" (Orain, 2021). As Gaïa creates her own autonomy by devising new pickled egg and natural dye concoctions, she connects to her mother while taking a slightly different path. The process of pickling and coloring eggs is something that Véronique likely would have enjoyed, but the recipe is part of Gaïa's own repertoire. When she engages in her mother's favorite activities, such as cooking and incorporating pleasure and play in the kitchen, she actively remembers her mother while also constructing agency for herself. Part of her grieving process is to take the parts of her mother that she loves and then rebuild them into something new and unique to her own experiences, a modified foundation for her to stand on. It is a foundation deeply rooted in her mother's traditions and energy, and it also has ample room to take those roots in different directions and thrive.

Food and the act of cooking not only bring her closer to how she remembers her mother, but also to parts of her she did not know. Gaïa mentions that when cooking leek pizza with Ann, her godmother, she "love[s] hearing about how she showed up as a friend" (Orain, 2021). Gaïa learns of an unknown Véronique—a woman who existed outside of her family framework, and this provides additional layers of connection to her mother and strengthens her new, confident, and autonomous foundation. She is becoming closer to her mother while also learning to journey through life independently. As Gaïa learns more about the person she loved and loves so dearly, by absorbing the stories and manifesting them into her own memories and experiences, she eases the pain of her grief. As she

navigates the kitchen, choosing new spices or vinegars for the eggs or thinking of interesting colors to create, she channels her mother's actions and behaviours. She is learning how her mother might behave in the kitchen while producing new recipes by engaging in the activity of cooking herself.

Step Five:

So then I put them in a big jar and let them hang out on the counter. And then once they reach room temperature, then I put them in the fridge. Sometimes I leave them out for a day. I like to make a Dijon-aise or a béarnaise, essentially it's like eggs on eggs. It's an egg-based sauce, a mayonnaise or aioli—always egg based.

The most popular, these are party hits... is mayo with a good curry powder in it. It's cumin-y, it's yellow. Right, so if my eggs are super pink and then I have this very yellow, yummy sauce... I've also done a pesto-y one, cracked pepper, béarnaise, or like... goodness knows. But most times they're purple-ish eggs with a curried mayo. (Orain, 2021)

Gaïa reflects, "I think [cooking] is something that connects me to all of the women mentors in my life" (Orain, 2021). Making beautiful, delicious food is essential to how she interprets the world and is pivotal to her lifeforce. The act of cooking has strengthened and deepened her relationships with three women role models: Barbara, Ann, and Véronique. And it is Véronique who is the thread running through each relationship. While sharing stories and memories of Véronique, Ann and Gaïa make one of her favorite dishes, leek pizza. Gaïa and Barbara initially made pickled eggs together as a way to bond. From there, Gaïa capitalized on what she recognized as an exciting opportunity to exercise her creativity by coloring the pickled eggs. Perhaps unintentionally, she also kindled a unique connection with her mother's essence, embodied in the playful process of dyeing and making the hardboiled eggs.

Grief is not linear nor is it something that ever ends. There are steps to take that can soften it, however, even for a few fleeting hours. For Gaïa, dyeing and pickling eggs reshapes her grief into something more manageable. Her process of making food reminds her of her mother and sharing the process with others is a way to connect and manifest her mother's energy while firmly moving forward in her life. Each time she steps into a kitchen to make anything at all, Gaïa embodies elements she adored about her mother, including her confidence and skill as a cook, the pleasure she took in life, and her playfulness. Dyed pickled eggs remind her of the person she loved most in this world but she has also made them her own. This mirrors how the journey forward is hers alone. As she puts it: "When we lose somebody who is foundational to how we navigate the world, it's also important to find [a] way[s] in which you are autonomous from it... how it informs it" (Orain, 2021).

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