

Greek Influence
Assignment 25



- Read Act 5 of *Hamlet*.
- Start memorizing the “to be or not to be” speech (on right). It will be due *after* the break.
- We will be writing one last narrative. Read **The Sea and the Wind that Blows** as an example of a musings essay. The essay will be on an object or action that represents some aspect of life to you. For White, *sailing* represented his life, and his inability to sail signified that he was “getting too old for life.” Some suggestions: acting, reading a book, your house, a picture on the wall, family reunions. For inspiration, you can read a musings essay by Julia Fijan (printed below), which she delivered as a speech.
- Listen to my lecture on “The Sea and the Wind that Blows,” posted on “Materials Needed” on the assignment page.

HAMLET’S ‘TO BE OR NOT TO BE’ SOLILOQUY

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die—to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: ’tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish’d. To die, to sleep.
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there’s the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause. There’s the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.

My Love for Baking: Mishaps Become Blessings

By Julia Fijan

I love baking so much that when I die the listing for my funeral will be as follows: *The funeral will be at 350 for 20 minutes. Flowers are unnecessary to send, but please send any edition of Southern Living Bi-monthly.*

I have been baking for as long as I can remember. When I first began baking, I was definitely not as adept in the kitchen as I am now. Of course, one always has to make the classic errors of forgetting to add eggs, or adding half a cup of baking soda instead of flour. I have made these errors and dozens of my own unique errors many times, yet the longer I bake, the longer I realize that there is great usefulness in tasting one's batter. Even an eight year old with an unsophisticated pallet can taste the potential catastrophe that lies in one cup of salt that should be one cup of sugar. The first lesson I learned? Always test one's baking.

It's funny how some days my baking can go incredibly well or incredibly not well. Take Lace Cookies for example. Made from oatmeal, brown sugar, butter and more butter, they are the most addicting, melt-in-your mouth doily-like, goodies. There are, however, the days when they are hard, dry and I have to spend half of the time scraping burnt batter off of the pans. There are times when I would swear that I followed the recipe exactly from precisely measuring out the flour to carefully flouring the pans, yet the cakes are dry, tasteless and disappointing as an empty carton of ice cream. I can never understand why baking isn't consistent and it can never be perfect everytime. But I guess my baking is just like any other aspect of my life. I strive for fluffy, I aim for creamy, but sometimes I just end up with crumbly and grainy.

Another mystery that I cannot unravel is butter. Ah, butter! Yes. I am a firm believer in the creamy goodness of butter, yet I have no idea why it makes things taste so good. I will never bake something without adding butter. Some businessmen are obsessed with their profit margins, some teachers are obsessed with depressing reading assignments, but I am obsessed with butter. If the recipe calls for vegetable oil, I substitute butter. If it calls for Crisco, I substitute butter. If it calls for no butter, I add butter anyway. As another (not quite as famous) kitchen goddess (Julia Child) once said, "fat gives things flavor". As butter is the essence of fat, and fat gives things flavor, of course we must always bake with butter. Just thinking about bacon fat and Crisco does not make me want to eat a cake...but butter? Yes obsessions have their downfall. You lose a lot of sleep and gain a lot of weight. If Salk wasn't obsessed by the little organisms on his petri dish we wouldn't have the polio vaccine. If we bakers weren't obsessed with our butter... Well, we would all be skinny and miserable.

I have such a joy in baking goodies or not-so-goodies. Many folks think that my obsession with baking is very odd and they cannot make sense of it. Well, I look at baking as any other art. The beauty of it is in the work that the artist puts into it, though recipes do not seem that different, I have learned the beauty of experimenting. Who knew that a vender at the St. Louis World fair could invent the dish to hold the most sacred dessert known to mankind by experimenting with waffles? As a singer I aim to take a piece of music and make it my own by writing embellishments, adding dynamic contrast or creating different perspective of the character. And as a baker I add that extra tablespoon of cocoa and remove the Red Velvet Cupcakes from the oven a minute sooner than the recipe indicates to make the recipe my own. Paula Deen's Cupcake recipe has now turned into Julia Fijan's recipe. Just like that.

However, the most important lesson that I have learned in baking is that every ingredient included in the recipe is paramount in creating a perfect desert. Not just every ingredient, but also every mishap in the kitchen. The obvious ingredients like flour, baking soda and salt come to mind. But what would oatmeal raisin cookies taste like if that one day long ago I had actually remembered to buy vanilla? They would be ordinary. What would actually make them five-star masterpieces? Well, the coffee liqueur that I substituted for the vanilla. Oh, yes, and the butter.