

Our Garden

Manuela describes the vegetable patch of her old German parents (Polish surnames) with the same mystical delight that I reserve for those stolen lettuces from the story of Rapunzel. They kept a heavily lidded jar in a cool and dark corner of the cellar, where fresh heads of *Grünkohl* from the yard would be prodigiously sequestered, thinly ribboned and tamped down into glazed earthenware in layer upon layer upon layer. Away from sunlight and treated charitably with plain salt, the cabbage's rigid leaf structure soon withers until the ribbed fronds glean their coloring and water content. In fermentation, physical extraction is outsourced to a metabolic process: the cabbage eventually succumbs, "stewing" in its own juice.

Fermented anger is sharper (more sour) than its fresh varieties – reduced to essences and devoid of liquidity; drained. See: Krautrock genre.

Morag tried to jerry-rig a jar of household sauerkraut in a small corner of the kitchen on Brayards Road. But the seal didn't properly adhere, or it was something else. A small leak sprung over the lip of the reinforcing saucer and dribbled slowly, progressively, towards the kitchen sink. It was tossed out in that passive manner which signifies communal living: unceremoniously, and without a trace. The bites we'd sampled before weren't yet tender enough.

Embalms in Ancient Egypt preserved the organs of the deceased in jars (with later technical developments, they were simply doctored and returned to the body cavity). The brain, back then, was thought inferior to the heart; and promptly disposed upon removal. Today brain death is a specific legal category as a consequence of life-support technology.

Recall that Kafka was a vegetarian.

Josefine once attempted a sourdough starter and fed it on and off for several days, stowing it each time afterwards in an old *Bonne Maman* jam jar kept on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator. Somehow she could never get it to grow properly.

Well, don't you sometimes think about the curlicued meatiness of the brain's lobes when you crack into a thick head of (especially red or purple) cabbage?

American scientific researchers defined the diet of European famine areas (at the end of World War II) as "whole-wheat bread, potatoes, cereals and considerable amounts of turnips and cabbage" when studying the effects of hunger, rather unethically, on subjects then conscientiously objecting.

Sandor Katz: "Just as the microbial cultures exist only as communities, so too do our broader human cultures."

Sandor Katz: "Self-sufficiency is a dangerous myth."