

THE TASTE OF BLUE

by Edward Einhorn

I've been eating blue all day long. It's one of my last chances to eat blue this year, I mean to really binge on it. The blue skies are slowly turning gray and tasteless again, and soon there will be nothing left but a sort of azure tang in the sky. So this morning, when I saw the skies lit up for one last day, I put on my blue dress, lay on my bed, and stared out my open window. I even played the blues. I know the blues are just a name, but the notes of a saxophone are like little explosions of blue upon my tongue, with a deep orangy spice. That's why I thought that sort of music was called the blues when I was really little, before I even knew that other kids didn't taste colors and sounds like I do.

There isn't much blue food to sustain me during the dark winter. Food, regular food, is full of browns and yellows and greens and reds and whites, but so little blue. I remember when I first saw blue ices I was very excited, but when I ran my tongue up and down the cold surface of it there was another taste, what others would call the real taste, which almost overwhelmed its delicate blueness.

I can't eat brown food. The taste of brown is so overwhelming that it makes me want to throw up. I avoid dirt and chocolate equally. They taste the same to me, both brown, just like the sound of a honking car, with its burst of brownness.

The reason I can luxuriate in color is that it is a Sunday, which means that I don't have to face school today. I don't have to spend hours looking at pages in a book or rows of numbers and trying to pay attention to their meaning, rather than the sometimes beautiful, sometimes appalling pictures they paint. For each letter and each number has a color, and together they form an abstract painting for me. Thus, each assignment becomes a distracting mosaic, and I sometimes write the wrong answer, not because I don't know the real one, but because, artistically, the letter or number I'm writing is so much more visually pleasing than the alternatives.

I need to make the paintings pleasing, because I can't forget them. I can recite lessons from years ago exactly, even if I still don't know exactly what they mean. I am a living hard drive, storing up page upon page of numbers and letters and figures. I am worst at assignments that ask me to see patterns—or rather, to see the patterns that others see. I see my own patterns, from the colors everything makes, but those are only mine to see, no one else's.

All those patterns, all those paintings, all those memories live inside little art galleries in my mind, little dollhouse museums where I can see my life laid out one by one if I close my eyes and visit. Each year of my life is a different museum, and I decorate it in my mind with dollhouse-sized objects that remind me of my favorite moments. In the dollhouse museum that was the seventh year of my life I have another, smaller dollhouse, an actual dollhouse, my

grandmother's dollhouse that I loved. My grandmother died and the dollhouse is somewhere far away, where my cousin lives, but in my museum it still sits, just as it ever was. And whenever I like I can visit it and play.

Deep in the basement of that museum are other paintings, paintings of my grandmother's funeral. Sometimes, after I visit the dollhouse, I visit those. They have faded to sepia now, they are no longer the dark brown they once were, so their taste is bearable. And sometimes they are even pleasant, somehow, the bitterness of the sepia mixed with unexpected flashes of pale blue, a taste which blends unexpectedly well with the sepia.

There are some basements in some museums I try to never visit. These have little doll locks and keys, and I have put the keys away, far away. But the paintings are there, still, brown, dark brown paintings. Among those paintings are all the times I became so lost in taste in color that I found myself...but they are locked away, for now. I will not look.

Recently, I went to a real, full sized museum, one that others could see too, and saw real, full sized art, including the art of Wassily Kandinsky. I read that he could see sound, just like I can, though he could just see, not taste it. I walked from painting to painting and tried to listen.

But they were silent. I couldn't hear them. The colors in the paintings reminded me of sounds, but they were my own sounds, not his. I felt almost deaf, looking at them. And I thought of all the times I saw and tasted music and how I wished I could share those tastes, those colors with someone else. Kandinsky had shared—and he hadn't. For if those paintings were silent to me, how deep the silence must be to everyone else who looks.

And yet I heard a woman whisper to a man, "It's beautiful..."

What did they see? What did they taste? Something, I thought. Something. And Kandinsky's paintings were beautiful to me too. Not, perhaps, for the same reasons as they were to that woman, but maybe for another reason. Because of...something.

So maybe, when I am sitting, looking in math class at the kaliedoscope of numbers my teacher has chalked upon the board, maybe someday I will show that kaliedoscope, and others will see...something.

Listen...Listen...cool, tingly and refreshing like frozen seltzer melting in your mouth. And so blue. Can you taste the saxophone on your tongue?