

GAstronomy 1.

TUNA PACKED in oil had more calories than tuna packed in water for the same cost, so that's what Codell bought. He got out a couple of cans, a bowl, and a spoon. He opened the cans, used the tops to strain and drain, and dumped the tunafish into the bowl. From his refrigerator, he took a jar of Miracle Whip sandwich spread - ersatz mayonnaise - and scooped a mound of the gelatinous substance on top of the tunafish. He mixed it together and dug in. The Miracle Whip hit the spot, smooth and cool. He ate an apple to the core and washed it all down with water. He washed the cans, bowl, and spoon. The empty cans went into a plastic bag under the sink, tied up to thwart his cockroach roommates.

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In making grilled cheese sandwiches, don't spare the margarine. Spread it to the edges. For crisp, even grilling, use frozen bread. Use Wonder Bread and Velveeta cheese. Nothing costs less or tastes better. It's fast and filling. Dark bread is good too, but Wonder Bread never spoils. That's the wonderful wonder of it. It's genius. Like Stevie Wonder singing happy birthday to Martin Luther King.

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Apples. Apple sauce. Bananas. Bean soup. Bisquick. Bologna. Cheerios. Chickens, whole. Cooking oil. Everything green from Eastern Market. Frozen fries. Hamburger Helper. Mac and cheese. Margarine. Milk, two percent. Nuts. Onions. Oranges. Orange juice, frozen. Peanut butter and jelly. Pickles. Popcorn by the pound.

Written by K.G. Jones.

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Potatoes. Quart-size beer on sale. Ramen noodles. Spam. Tuna in oil. Velveeta. White bread and dark rye.

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Nothing is more black and white than binging on White Castle sliders. Those oniony, miniature square burgers were a luxury, but they were worth it. For a couple of bucks and a long walk, you could get eight of those suckers. The grease will coat your throat all the way home.

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Codell was a mess inside. He variously had bad breath, acid reflux, bloating, and gas at both ends. His flatulence was so rank that a blind man with a dog mistook Codell's gas for the dog's gas and apologized. Codell didn't correct him. At the Bronx one time, Codell expelled gas that sounded like a duck quacking. The guy on the stool next to him made a face but didn't say anything. "Par-DOON," Codell minced, and the guy next to him used his middle finger to scratch his cheek. The bartender was more direct: "sometimes you smell like you're dead on the inside."

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His gas metamorphosed into a more substantive element. In the Bronx's men's room, on its only working throne, he oozed. He sat for a few minutes, waiting to make sure that his anal discharge had ceased, listening. Someone had come in and gone out twice. He wore black boots. He came in a third time and knocked on the door to the

stall. "Shit or get off the can!" Codell flushed and, grinning, surrendered the reeking premise. Black boots closed the stall door behind him: "stinking scum!"

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Codell needed to work out some gas. He stood in his apartment a few feet from a wall, facing it. Then he stood on his head, now facing away from the wall, with his heels against the wall for balance. From his headstand he pushed up into a handstand. From headstand to handstand to headstand to handstand, Codell pressed up his body weight. Blood rushed to his head. With each extension up, his arms quivered a little more. Up and down, up and down, up and down; down and up, down and up, down and up, his inverted room was in motion. After ten times, he dropped to his hands and knees, breathing hard, face flushed and heated. He caught his breath and repeated the routine three more times. Shoulders aching and arms rubbery, he stood gas free and reacquainted himself with the upright perspective of his room.

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After beer, Codell's piss was pale as water. It was insipid. *What's more insipid, your grin or your will?* There was safety in the Cass Corridor for the insipid, even for the tepid. But never for the meek or the timid.

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