

It is the third of September and I am cooking tomato sauce. I have a movie on the TV for background noise and my roommate has just lit a candle that smells like cinnamon. I am thinking about my mom and how she has cooked for me my entire life. Tomato sauce is her specialty. My earliest memories are of my mom in the kitchen, stirring a wooden spoon in her big white sauce pot. I always knew it would be a good night to eat when I saw that pot come out.

Sometimes, when I was younger she would pick me up from school and I could tell if we were having tomato sauce for dinner because I could smell the hints of garlic and olive oil on her hands when she hugged me. It never smelled bad, it just smelled like home.

It is the third of September and I am thinking about how she made time to cook for me every night for 18 years. I am thinking about the number of eggs she has cracked and cups of broth she has poured and balls of dough she has kneaded. I am thinking about the times I would come home from school and there would be sliced apples and caramel on the table, or Rold Gold pretzel twists with homemade ranch, an odd yet addictive combination.

I am thinking about how there is no purer love than that. A sliced orange to share or a plate of cheese and crackers. Because I like them. Because she knows I like them.

When I first moved into my apartment, her parting gift to me was four cans of san marzano tomatoes, the good kind in the yellow can with the old-school text on the front, and three boxes of pasta. She did not need to leave me a recipe. She knows I have watched her enough times to make it by heart. She knows I learned how to dice garlic purely through osmosis, by watching her fingers deftly peel the layers back and chop through the bulb. She knows I know to use a lot of salt, more than you think you need

It is the third of September and I am chopping my own garlic and I am stirring tomatoes and I am making sauce and pasta for all three of my roommates because all I can think about is how tomato sauce is meant to be shared. This is not a meal for one person.

It is the third of September and I am thinking about how life just keeps on going. Without fail. The sun rises and the sun falls and life goes on. Normally, this is a sentiment that terrifies me. I don't always like thinking that I can't get back to parts of my life I miss. That I can't go back to the days of my mom cooking for me.

But today, it is the most pleasant thought. Life goes on. Which means more days of *this this this*. Cinnamon candles and diced garlic and san marzano tomatoes and of course, sauce. Enough for the four of us.

