

The Alchemy of Memory: Recipes for Remembrance

Basket:

Main Ingredients:

housemate
train conductor
departure
snow peas
ice cream
cherry
waiting room

Spice Pack:

1 smidge of adoration
1/4 pinch of grief
1/8 dollop of bliss
1/3 tablespoon of tenderness

[Intro](#)

Train platform. Full-swarm people: Humans, Chimeras, far-foreign others. Choke-steam: so hot -wet, so also-same to monster life-wind. Gerald-Human on train platform with small-clock. He holds small-clock and makes full-big life-wind. Reads hands of small-clock. It is departure almost-time. Gerald thinks of Gerald-mother, far away down train tracks. Gerald has soul-sick to think that Gerald-mother has full-bad body-sick: blood-sick, skin-sick, bladder-sick. Weeks in doctor-wait-chamber and doctor-hotel with chemical-vines in arms, nose, other-where. And Gerald so work-excess, so time-starve. Gerald shakes head. He has small-clock, is master of small-clock and train schedule, but has no time that is self-belong. Self-belong time is dead, and Gerald has grief for years. He is grief-have same with money-have. Gerald: dollar is unit for tear-measure.

Train goes. Gerald goes, farther from body-sick mother. Passenger car, food car, sleeping car, cargo car. Together-go in line like peas inside leaf-jacket. Gerald walks in passenger car, he is ticket-take, acquaintance-make. Flat-smiles at passengers, like cordial housemate with no-care for housemate-others. All job, not emotion-reality. Gerald emotion-reality is naked and full-cold; does not have suit, hat, badge, small-clock. Does not have flat-smile or want acquaintance-make.

Gerald reaches passenger seat with female-small-Human. Fire-hair girl, alone. Gerald asks fire-hair girl for ticket. Asks why alone. Offers help. Fire-hair girl makes smile-teeth, mouth-scoops dining car ice-cream-meal. Cherry slides in ice-cream-meal, laughs chocolate and tiny-shard sugar-rainbow. Fire-hair girl says this is newborn experience, travels independent first-time to far-family. She says "independent" is not-same with "alone." Fire-hair girl is full-happy. Gerald has wide-look, has awe-respect. Marvels at fire-hair girl.

Train loud-screams. Steam life-wind covers window. Gerald makes smile-teeth at fire-hair girl, emotion-reality this time. He thanks. He gives small-clock to fire-hair girl. Fire-hair girl has uncomprehend-eyes. Gerald explains small-clock is not gift, but pay. Pay with not-money. Pay for service of perceive-new, grief-ease.

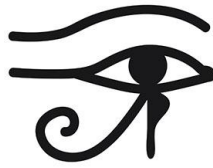
[-Tycho](#)

Every night this week I've heard his voice yelling from the train. I think he's saying, "All Aboard!" The building rattles as the train thunders by. Just as I consume my last scoop of ice-cream loaded with chocolate and cherries. My nightly treat never tastes as sweet as the first spoonful. Then I am filled with guilt that I let gluttony win. But who cares I had a crappy day. The love of my life left. He left me standing in the airport to watch his plane take off. Only a kiss on the forehead was our last embrace. This blows. He was my world. And now I'm eating icecream. Or my feelings I haven't decided because it's been a week and I'm still here. He's over across the world and all I have is Jack, his cat. And while Jack gives me hope and allows me to believe that we aren't done yet. A week has gone by my snow peas have blossomed and yet, the phone hasn't rang, vibrated or twirped and he's been on the other line. FML... at least I have icecream.

-[XeZenobia](#)

No greater but so slight grief:
slouched in the drafty waiting room, huffing
cheap berry—*cherry*—air freshener, shivering
as snow plummets outside in pea-sized drops, freezing
me where I yearn, awaiting
the crisp cut of the train's wailing
[whistle](#) through this cool mourning
and the conductor's call once all stills, announcing
your return home, ending
this weary vigil. Beginning,
again, warm days of ice cream dripping
down chins, sweet bliss missing
lips by a smidge--rectified by a swift meeting
of you and me at the teeth, twining
together, *knowing*:
No itinerant more adored than a tender thief.

[~Noxi](#) ₪



I look down at the clear plastic tupperware that I hastily snatched out of the cabinet this morning; a few of my snow peas got into the divided portioned section where I had my mashed potatoes. I always hated for my food to touch, but today I didn't even bother hesitating to eat the rest because I am starving and I can hear the angels singing with every bite. I skipped lunch at work, and now is just not the time to worry about things like food touching. It is silent; most of the people that were here are gone with their respective loved ones. I keep staring at this painting hanging across the room of about eight people sitting around. How ironic it is that there's a picture of a waiting room in an actual waiting room. I can't see who painted the thing, but I bet they had to be pretty bored to just sit around and paint a bunch of people sitting around... unless this is a masterpiece. They usually are. A shrill voice [seeps through](#) the intercom letting the room know that the 9:30pm train will be departing the station soon. I go to use the bathroom and then come back out and just walk around the Peachtree Station. There is a lot of wood, I notice, and the brown tile floor doesn't really help to bring in any color, but I can't help but to want to take in every moment I have left here. I want to remember that old couple sitting in the corner holding hands while the wife rests her head on her husband's shoulder. I can't forget the twitchy woman behind the glass at the counter who has admitted to never adjusting to the "bug problem" here in Georgia. Mr. and Mrs. Lankert stroll into the main sitting area from some back room. The train conductor from the 8pm train that arrived tonight follows. Suddenly, I felt like my heart was in my ass as they walked toward me. Seeing a part of her in front on me. Alive. Well. It's like the world tapped me on the shoulder to wake me up and remind me that my best friend and roommate was not coming home tonight. I dropped her off here two days ago, but she won't be coming back through those heavy hand-carved double doors. Her father took me by the hand, and placed his other arm around my shoulder to walk me to the car. His face was plump and his eyes red from crying. I stopped, remembering what I had brought for Giselle. I went back into the room and placed her favorite Carlos' French Vanilla ice cream with chocolate sprinkles and a cherry on the bench that she waited on. The twitchy teller smiled at me and nodded her head. Little did I know, I'd never be able to give it to her.

“Avicia Znevffn.” I heard the robotic voice address me, as the conductor blipped into existence in the doorway of my coach.

I looked up.

“Your departure point approaches.”

Grief welled up in me as I [pondered](#) what might be waiting for me, as the coach pulled out of the whirling ether and into the transport station. I was leaving my home world to travel to Earth and meet up with the other alchemists.

The week before, I’d said goodbye to my housemates and went home to see my family one last time. I’d wandered into my mother’s garden, the sky was a warm orange color and the snow pea flowers were in bloom. I felt a surge of tenderness as I looked intently at their delicate white and purple blooms and felt tears fill my eyes.

As the coach slowly stopped whirling and the robot blipped away with a tinny, “Goodbye,” the coach doors slid open and I was surprised to see a long, bright hallway in front of me.

I drew a deep breath and stepped out, hearing my soft footsteps echo down in the emptiness around me. It was a long hall, and the waiting room entrance waiting at the end.

As I drew closer to the door, a robotic voice intoned my name, the doors opened, and a technician greeted me.

“First time away from home?” The woman’s eyes showed concern, and I felt something like adoration. She reminded me of my mother.

“It is.”

“Well dear, it’ll be perfectly fine. Missions like this are what we’re made for.”

I knew. We were meant to travel to other worlds and interact with any beings willing to collaborate cultures and learn.

“What’s the transport like?” I asked.

“Quick. The serum will remind you of cherry ice cream. A cold feeling, a taste of sweetness, and you’ll be there.”

I felt a strange surge of bliss at the thought of a sweet treat.

“I’m ready.”

With one more warm smile she took my hand, “Right this way.”

She led me through the maze of hallways and then, we were there. I saw my transport pod in front of me, and another technician. He smiled at me as he hooked me up to Life and Transport Support, told me how I would feel during the trip then mentioned, “Look for M. Prophetissima and Rebeg Maestro. They’ll be your mission guides, and will bring you to meet up with the other alchemists.

“And don’t be afraid,” the woman implored me. “It’s all going to be okay.”

I nodded thankfully, and said again, “I’m ready.”

They stepped back as the pod door descended into its locked position. I heard a soft whirr, and suddenly felt cold.
I tasted cherries.

-[Avicia](#)

[Outro](#)