

'Mastering the Art of French Cooking' in a Little Poem

O, that I were duct tape upon that spine...



MCKENZIE LYNN TOZAN

JUL 24, 2025



Zoe D

Zoe D



Not my usual post but I thought Substack might appreciate—

My grandma's copy of Mastering the Art of French Cooking by Julia Child



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SUBSTACK.COM/@ZOEDET

I came across [this post by Zoe D](#) on my Substack feed yesterday, & I've thought of it incessantly since: the variations of tape, even duct, the fingerprints & stains to the cover, the slip of the pages from the binding . . .

There's a poem in there. Maybe this is it.

how many slices of tape does it take to measure a life

family heirlooms, hand-me-downs, such
magical things I witness in other people's homes:

like a worn & well-loved copy of Julia Child's
Mastering the Art of French Cooking, tape softened &

faded with years, 524 recipes (make that 781):
masking tape's edges blackened, duct tape bubbly but

holding on, minus the tails that lift: gestures
to an outward world, family gatherings, *more butter*

perhaps: another chance at the sizzle & hum
that comes from a grandmother's kitchen, quaint

like the hardback cover of her beloved cookbook,
covered in fingerprints, grease, & charcoal,

pages beneath yellowed from time—after being tightly bound
into an omnibus of recipes—after being passed back & forth

across oceans, stamped *confidential*—after Julia Child first
stood tall & elegant & full of life over a book's worth

of sauces, bowls & pans & ramekins galore, as she
worked to refine them, bring them to the page

in a world of kitchens, editions, the distinct smell
of mustard, mayonnaise, hollandaise—

the dust of old tape & a well-loved spine.

One more time, in all her glory:



courtesy of the lovely Zoe D (@zoedet/Substack)...

This is my usual content (poetry & drawing poems from life) while also not, in this little world of food, travel, & failed language-learning (insert Meryl Streep's incredible delivery of "*Dommmage!*" here) that I've tried to create on Substack . . . but it's the truest version of me when those two worlds come together, even if only the length of a pinch of salt.

Thank you for spending a little time with me. I've been away for a while again, but there's something healing about coming here, something in the longer form, more poetic, more confessional space, while I take a long break from social media (more on that later, maybe). I'm hopeful to share more stories, recipes, & maybe poems with you.

To bring us back, a little Croatian:

- *Dommmage* - Shame (from French to English) - Sramota (srah-moh-tah)
- Poetry - Poezija (poe-ezz-ee-yah)
- Gratitude - Zahvalnost (zah-vahl-nost)
- *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* - *Savladavanje Umjetnosti Francuske Kuhinje*

And until next time... Želim vam prekrasan tjedan (Have a wonderful week).

Thank you for being here! **All content is free for everyone to read**, though there might be some book content in the future that will be exclusive to paid subscribers. If you'd like to support me another way, you can buy me a coffee! ☺☕ Thanks & Hvala!

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