

What is the relation between a fruit and a vegetable? A book transpires one letter and then one word at a time and nothing about reading can prevent this from happening. For this reason, books are best diluted or read over a good many years. Only things that are consumed endure beyond their shelf life. Nothing is really very different [if you say it] is. I had dinner yesterday at WD-50, which is a restaurant located where the new Fukienese area of Chinatown and the old pickle shops of the defunct Lower East Side almost come into alignment. The restaurant is at 50 Clinton Street and it has a post-Craftsman style décor with bulbous glass lamps that look like fluorescent flower bulbs. The chef's name is Wylie Dufresne. He is young and looks like a cowboy reincarnated as a skateboarder. His father Dewey is also a chef.

WD-50 is probably the only restaurant in Manhattan that makes you hallucinate the food you are eating while you are eating it. The food can be quite un-foodlike. I ate at the restaurant a few nights ago and afterwards my taste buds felt incongruous and ecstatic. I remember seeing something on another table that looked like dessert and I ordered it. A few moments later there were bonbon sized bits of pineapple on a plate. They had been soaked in something briny and had become pickles. Off to one side of the fruit was smeared what looked like hot fudge sauce except that it was made of ketchup and jalapeno peppers. The sauce was semi-frozen. The sauce was hot and cold and cold and hot I couldn't tell which. I put the pineapple in my mouth and it was like eating something that was once a vegetable. The chef had sprinkled some salt scented with what looked like dour chips of limes. It was not really necessary to eat the food; one could breathe it. When I put all this in my mouth I tasted so many things I forgot what was in my mouth. Eating at WD-50 is like reading Proust backwards. I looked over at a man at the table next to ours and he had the face of a six-year-old. The ideas of food erase the food itself and then become the food you did not think you were eating. Time passes inordinately or not at all. What is it like to eat an idea or its suggestion? As anyone who has eaten can tell you, the most beautiful memories are memories that one has forgotten how to have. Eating at WD-50 is like having psychoanalysis with a starch, a sugar, or a fat.

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