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## Salt

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Salt  
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I went to school on a farm. Yes, I still learned calculus, and had English classes, and had to do attendance in the mornings, but yes, we kept animals, and grew produce in the scorching heat of late August, and cooked meals on lunch duty for the hundred-or-so of us on the campus.

Once, when the middle schoolers were on duty, working under the guidance of Katie (or Miss Katie, as I called her when I was two feet shorter), they wanted to make a cake. They baked a beautiful chocolate cake with peppermint icing "as a treat for the high schoolers," I was told.

"Odd," I thought to myself as I took the first bite.

I was right to be hesitant. Their "gift" was a trojan horse for enough salt to make a person gag. Apparently for every tablespoon of sugar the recipe called for, they'd accidentally added—

Salt. It's the thing I remember most about being in the ocean in South Carolina with my family. The tame waves wrapping themselves around my ankles made an impression as my mom, my dad, and I took tentative steps onto the doused sand into the dark waters of a cloudy day. I remember clinging to my mother's pool floaty, both of us out of our depth in the chaotic waters, my father towing us along. I remember the thrill of each crashing wave on our makeshift raft, and my growing unease, but most of all I remember being pulled underwater, my eyes stinging, my mouth burning with the taste of—

Salt. It was the taste of my grandparents' Himalayan salt lamp—delicious, forbidden. It sat on the hutch in their library, my place of residence every time I slept over, glowing gold in the darkness. It spoke to me, sang to me, in the moments just before dreaming. I'm sorry grandma and grandpa, I couldn't help myself. Half asleep, I licked it and was greeted by the familiar tang of—

Salt. When I think of the kitchen in the home I grew up in, the only place I've ever lived, that's what I think of. The glass bowl of kosher salt sitting by the oven has stayed much longer than any of the primary fixtures. The microwave was replaced before I turned ten, and the old oven has resided in our basement for more years than I can count, replaced by a newer (and much more frustrating) substitute.

My great grandfather built my house and gave it to my grandfather, who gave it to my mother, who intends to give it to me. When my parents leave, I wonder if they will take the salt dish with them. I wonder if the memories of cooking together—of the constant radio of Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong in the background while my father created something delicious—will go with them too. I like to believe my kitchen will still be my kitchen, but I think something will always feel missing.