

THE MOLOTOV COCKTAIL

Good Dirt II



by Andrea DeAngelis

The topsoil felt paltry at our former suburban New Jersey home, so mother had good dirt trucked in, glorious and richly nutritious. But excavation was not sustainable with the neighbors so close. Despite our father's failed protests, mother relocated us here. Wherever here is.

Mother said it's better we don't know. The winters are darker and colder. Ally, our cartographer, reassures us it's Vermont. She also says Mother is not our mother. She is our kidnapper, a faulty fusion of love and control. I am not allowed to be more than 60 feet away from her, none of us are. We must be able to hear her commands.

This borrowed body is a soul trap. I don't know what I was before I was born into slow flesh, flawed and corrupting, but I know I will find the answers grubbing in the earth.

Our new neighbors keep their distance. This is an existence without distractions, except for the dirt. It must be the best kind of dirt for consumption and production.

I swallow the earth to feel free, gorging on its nutty softness. Dirt tastes good, sour and smooth, hardy. We are hungry all the time and dirt settles the stomach. The dirt we dig for is infinite, the deeper the better, less parasites. See those dirt hills? We have already unearthed what our hands can reach, toiled so long our nails are torn off entirely. They look better that way, raw, unmade and pure, our hands caked with rich fermenting soil. We scoop the dirt into our mouths but it's never enough. I want to burrow inside my craving.

The perfect morsels should be without grit, and gray with red streaks. You may forage there, as that patch is untouched. Good dirt is variegated, it can have girth and grubs writhing on your tongue. Your teeth crack on the rougher chunks. Mother can no longer eat as much, bacteria and spores have festered ulcers and ruptured her innards. But the craving for abrasion lingers to exfoliate your insides. She is thin enough now. She can barely keep solid food down, but the desire to consume and be consumed remains. The simulation of food is better than no food. There are still weekly weighings, down from daily. Mother is pleased with our progress on the esteemed chart. It is best not to eat too much. You must restrict your calories to achieve the expected weight. When appetite will not conform and the belly growls and roars, fill it with dirt, water and salt cookies to dampen the noise.

You can spread dirt on a cookie sheet and season it with vinegar and grubs, bake it in a wood-burning oven or smoke it on a barbecue, but it's best ingested raw. We should open our own restaurant. After preparation, the dirt has a tart taste but melts in your mouth like what I imagine chocolate would taste like.

There is no substitute for the real thing. You can sprinkle your seeds, refrain from shucking your nuts, grate your roots, place your precise decorative leaves and herbs to placate the hipsters with your so-called foraging, but simulated dirt is not good dirt. Good dirt takes time and persistence to find.

If we eat enough, we will unbecome, return to the earth and rise as golems. That's what we were many generations ago. We weren't this weak flesh to be disciplined and corralled. We were strong because we had no will of our own to tame and subdue.



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