ENCOUNTERING *THIS;* ORANGE PEEL AND ONION SKIN

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Abstract

Attention with care given to the other is at the core of my practice. *Encountering This; Orange Peel and Onion Skin* contains accounts of encounters with *this* and considers my relationship and understanding of *this.* This paper is not concerned with placing myself nor my work in the context of contemporary art rather the priority of the paper is on *attention* and *a way of being, in relation to things*. I place my work in relation to Jan Zwicky, Elaine Scarry, and Tim Lilburn. These writers and thinkers are engaging with a conversation about ones' relation to the other. In the paired exhibition *Orange Peel and Onion Skin, 'this'* is navel orange peel and red onion skin. The work is a parallel investigation of two particular, related things foregrounding their *thisness*. The work will be exhibited in Gales Gallery, an off-site location, and a kitchen studio space.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Orange Peel and Onion Skin



Figure 1. Ashley Culver, *Citrus sinensis Page 1*, photograph, 2015.



Figure 2. Ashley Culver, *Allium cepa Page 1*, photograph, 2015.



Figure 3. Ashley Culver, *Citrus sinensis Page 2*, photograph, 2015.



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Figure 7. Ashley Culver, *Citrus sinensis Page 4*, photograph, 2015.



Figure 8. Ashley Culver, *Allium cepa Page 4*, photograph, 2015.

The[i] texture is more pronounced in the Navel orange peels compared to Valencia. The Navel orange peels are thicker, which makes the process of peeling more involved.
The contrast between the inner pith and outer peel is drastic. The colour and texture of the peels' opposite sides have almost no relation. The outer surface is dimpled with miniature divots. The inner surface—the pith—is soft and fibrous.

Let it be. Let the peel curl as it pleases without interference.

Rather than shriveling up, the navel peel seems to throw itself open. It twists and bends, stretching then settling into its form. Forms of the dried navel orange peel long to be gazed upon. If I[ii] flip one of the dried peels upside-down so it balances on two or three points the peel appears very animated.

Onion skins are smooth and tissue-thin. It is crisp and dry—the last layer of the onion bulb. The gradient colour changes throughout the skin have elegance. Ridges become pronounced near the top of the bulb.

The veins systemically run from the top axis to the bottom axis, evenly spaced magenta lines encircling the onion. Short veins intermittently appear to draw patterns, constructing a network.

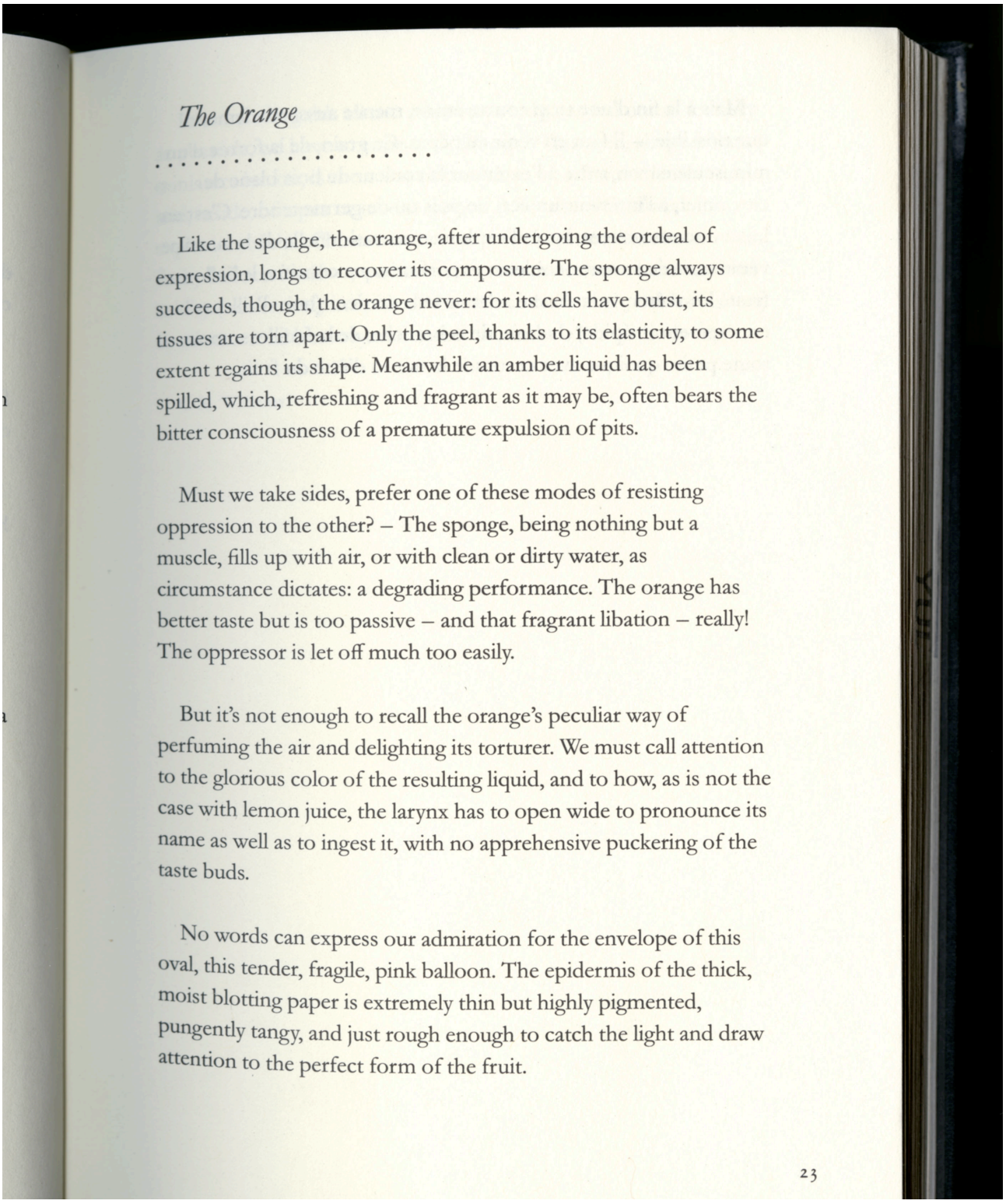
The natural light emphasizes the translucent qualities of the onion skin. Light illuminates lightness. *This* physical object floats.
Through peeling the fragile sphere of the onion, the skin is shattered. Cracks are formed when the onion skin is flattened, when undergoing the change of a three-dimensional object to a two-dimensional one. Fragments fall away from the whole.



Figure 9. Ashley Culver, *Citrus sinensis Page* 6 photograph, 2015.



Figure 10. Ashley Culver, *Allium cepa Page 6*, photograph, 2015.



The Orange

. . . . . .

Like the sponge, the orange, after undergoing the ordeal of expression, longs to recover its composure. The sponge always succeeds, though, the orange never: for its cells have burst, its tissues are torn apart. Only the peel, thanks to its elasticity, to some extent regains its shape. Meanwhile an amber liquid has been spilled, which, refreshing and fragrant as it may be, often bears the bitter consciousness of a premature expulsion of pits.

Must we take sides, prefer one of these modes of resisting oppression to the other? – The sponge, being nothing but a muscle, fills up with air, or with clean or dirty water, as circumstance dictates: a degrading performance. The orange has better taste but is too passive – and that fragrant libation – really! The oppressor is let off much too easily.

But it's not enough to recall the orange's peculiar way of perfuming the air and delighting its torturer. We must call attention to the glorious color of the resulting liquid, and to how, as is not the case with lemon juice, the larynx has to open wide to pronounce its name as well as to ingest it, with no apprehensive puckering of the taste buds.

No words can express our admiration for the envelope of this oval, this tender, fragile, pink balloon. The epidermis of the thick, moist blotting paper is extremely thin but highly pigmented, pungently tangy, and just rough enough to catch the light and draw attention to the perfect form of the fruit.

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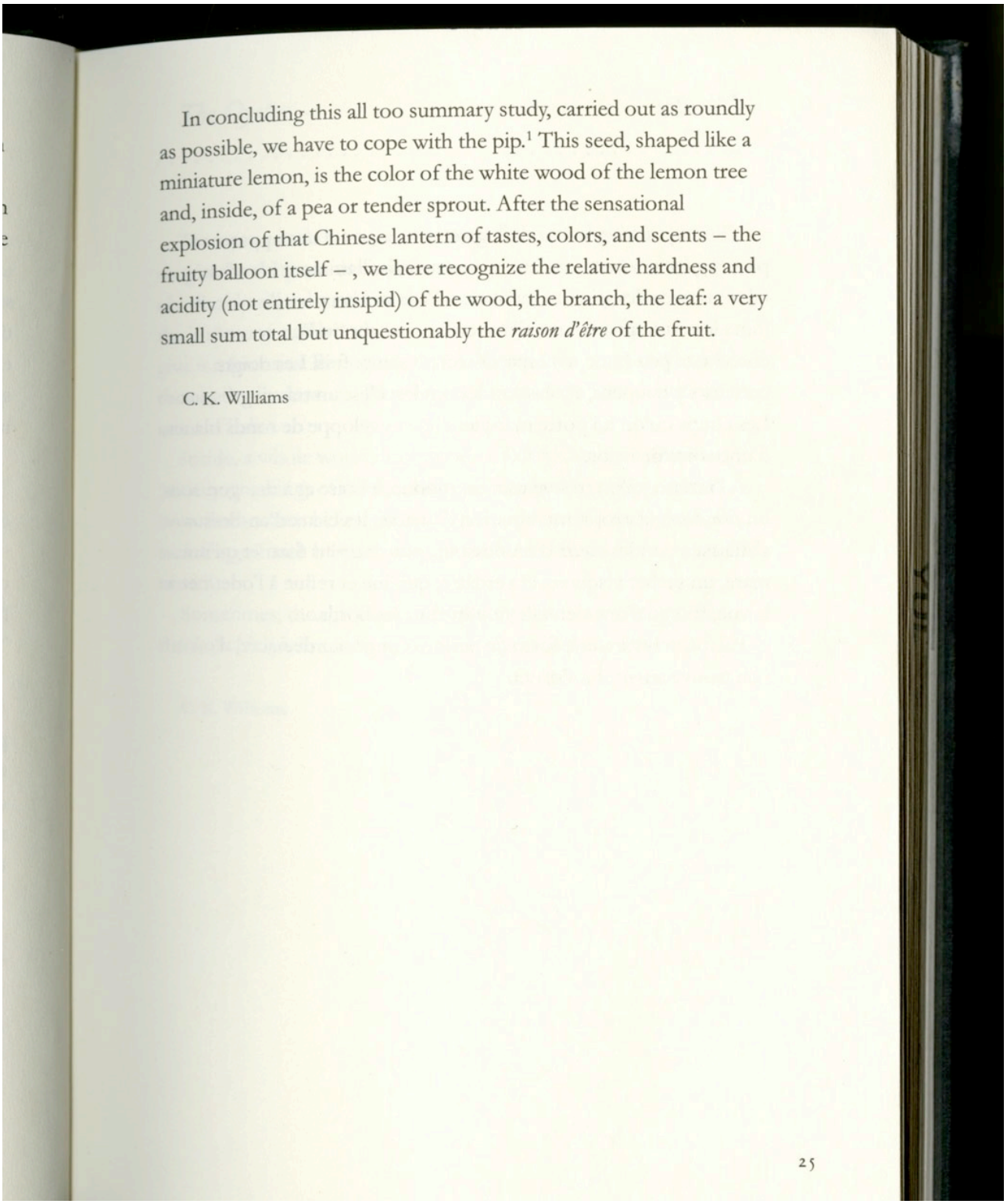
Figure 11. Guiton, Margaret ed. *Francis Ponge Selected Poems*. Trans. C. K. Williams, John Montague, and Margaret Guiton. Ed. Germaine Bree. Winston-Salem: Wake Forest University Press, 1994. Page 23. Print.



In concluding this all too summary study, carried out as roundly as possible, we have to cope with the pip.[1] This seed, shaped like a miniature lemon, is the color of the white wood of the lemon tree and, inside, of a pea or tender sprout. After the sensational explosion of that Chinese lantern of tastes, colors, and scents – the fruity balloon itself – , we here recognize the relative hardness and acidity (not entirely insipid) of the wood, the branch, the leaf: a very small sum total but unquestionably the *raison d'être* of the fruit.

C. K. Williams

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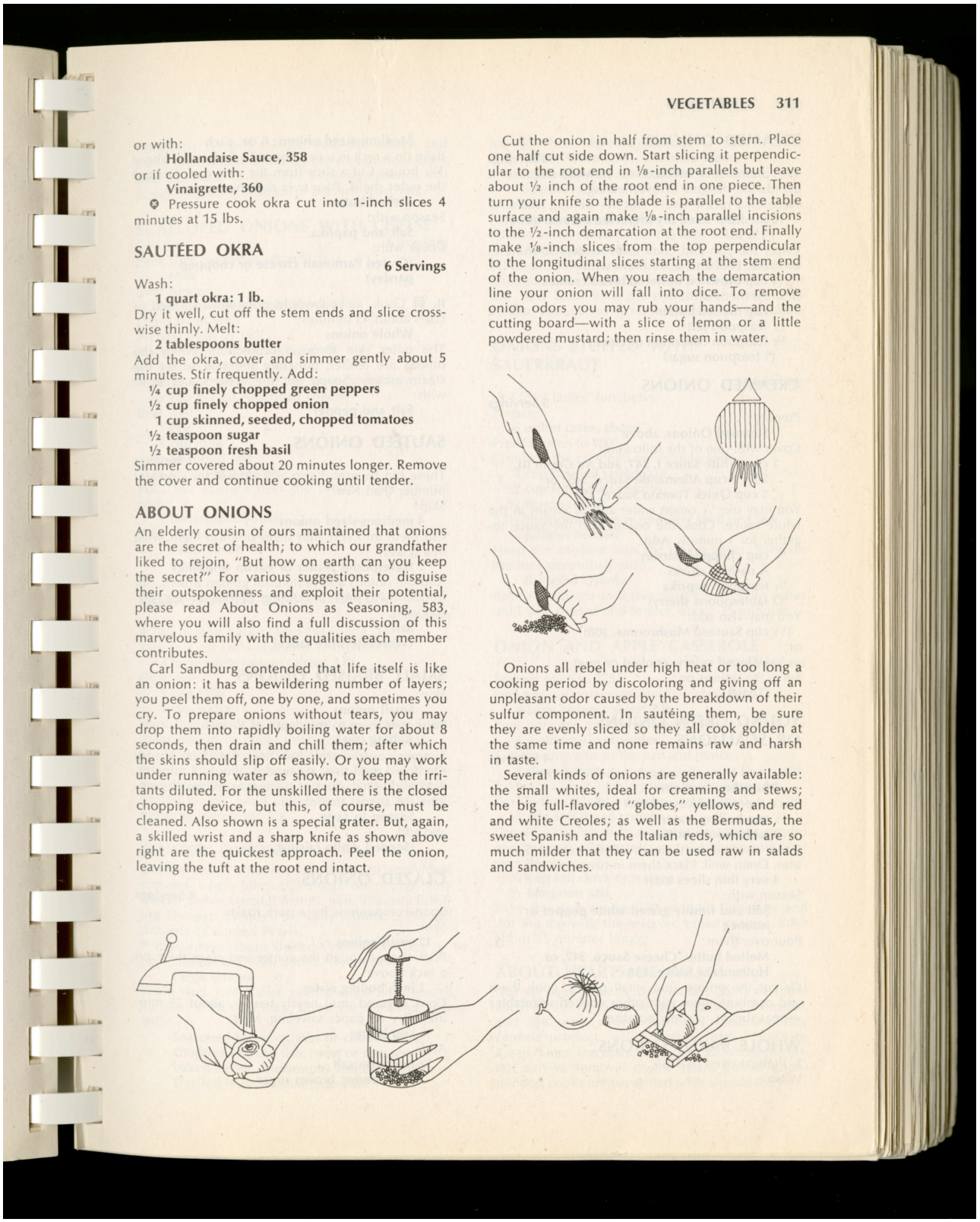
Figure 12. Guiton, Margaret ed. *Francis Ponge Selected Poems*. Trans. C. K. Williams, John Montague, and Margaret Guiton. Ed. Germaine Bree. Winston-Salem: Wake Forest University Press, 1994. Page 25. Print.



or with:
Hollandaise Sauce, 358
or if cooled with:
Vinaigrette, 360
✪ Pressure cook okra cut into 1-inch slices 4 minutes at 15 lbs.

SAUTÉED OKRA

6 Servings

Wash:
1 quart okra: 1 lb.
Dry it well, cut off the stem ends and slice crosswise thinly. Melt:
2 tablespoons butter
Add the okra, cover and simmer gently about 5 minutes. Stir frequently. Add:
¼ cup finely chopped green peppers
½ cup finely chopped onion
1 cup skinned, seeded, chopped tomatoes
½ teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon fresh basil
Simmer covered about 20 minutes longer. Remove the cover and continue cooking until tender.

ABOUT ONIONS

An elderly cousin of ours maintained that onions are the secret of health; to which our grandfather liked to rejoin, "But how on earth can you keep the secret?" For various suggestions to disguise their outspokenness and exploit their potential, please read About Onions as Seasoning, 583, where you will also find a full discussion of this marvelous family with the qualities each member contributes.

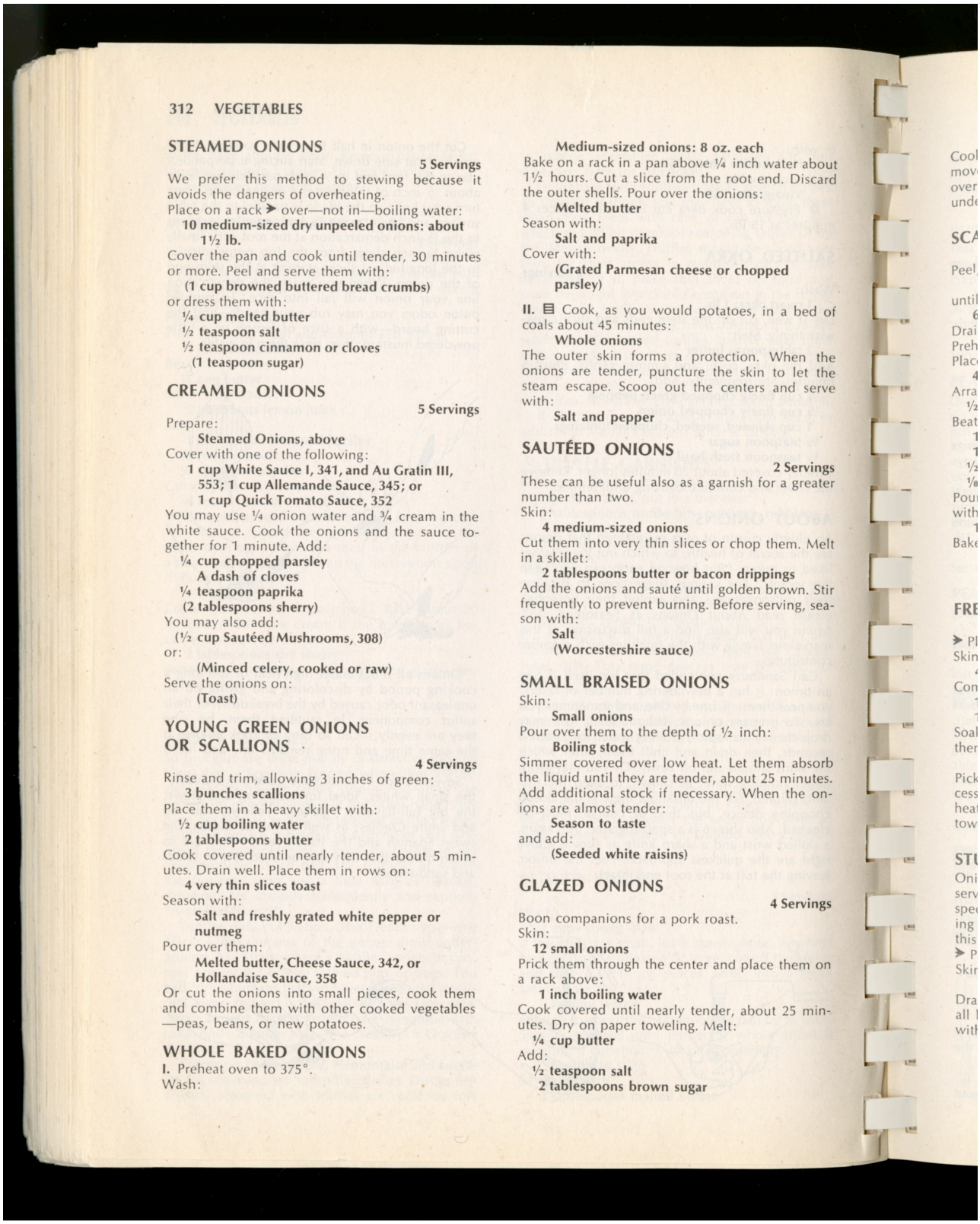
Carl Sandburg contended that life itself is like an onion: it has a bewildering number of layers; you peel them off, one by one, and sometimes you cry. To prepare onions without tears, you may drop them into rapidly boiling water for about 8 seconds, then drain and chill them; after which the skins should slip off easily. Or you may work under running water as shown, to keep the irritants diluted. For the unskilled there is the closed chopping device, but this, of course, must be cleaned. Also shown is a special grater. But, again, a skilled wrist and a sharp knife as shown above right are the quickest approach. Peel the onion, leaving the tuft at the root end intact.

Cut the onion in half from stem to stern. Place one half cut side down. Start slicing it perpendicular to the root end in ⅛-inch parallels but leave about ½ inch of the root end in one piece. Then turn your knife so the blade is parallel to the table surface and again make ⅛-inch parallel incisions to the ½-inch demarcation at the root end. Finally make ⅛-inch slices from the top perpendicular to the longitudinal slices starting at the stem end of the onion. When you reach the demarcation line your onion will fall into dice. To remove onion odors you may rub your hands—and the cutting board—with a slice of lemon or a little powdered mustard; then rinse them in water.

Onions all rebel under high heat or too long a cooking period by discoloring and giving off an unpleasant odor caused by the breakdown of their sulfur component. In sautéing them, be sure they are evenly sliced so they all cook golden at the same time and none remains raw and harsh in taste.

Several kinds of onions are generally available: the small whites, ideal for creaming and stews; the big full-flavored "globes," yellows, and red and white Creoles; as well as the Bermudas, the sweet Spanish and the Italian reds, which are so much milder that they can be used raw in salads and sandwiches.

Figure 13. Rombauer, Irma S. and Becker, Marion Rombauer. *Joy of Cooking*. Illus. Ginnie Hofmann and Ikki Matsumoto. New York: the Penguin Group, 1975. Page 311. Print.



312 VEGETABLES

STEAMED ONIONS

5 Servings

We prefer this method to stewing because it avoids the dangers of overheating.
Place on a rack ➤ over—not in—boiling water:
10 medium-sized dry unpeeled onions: about 1½ lb.
Cover the pan and cook until tender, 30 minutes or more. Peel and serve them with:
(1 cup browned buttered bread crumbs)
or dress them with:
¼ cup melted butter
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon cinnamon or cloves
(1 teaspoon sugar)

CREAMED ONIONS

5 Servings

Prepare:
Steamed Onions, above
Cover with one of the following:
1 cup White Sauce I, 341, and Au Gratin III, 553; 1 cup Allemande Sauce, 345; or 1 cup Quick Tomato Sauce, 352
You may use ¼ onion water and ¾ cream in the white sauce. Cook the onions and the sauce together for 1 minute. Add:
¼ cup chopped parsley
A dash of cloves
¼ teaspoon paprika
(2 tablespoons sherry)
You may also add:
(½ cup Sautéed Mushrooms, 308)
or:
(Minced celery, cooked or raw)
Serve the onions on:
(Toast)

YOUNG GREEN ONIONS OR SCALLIONS

4 Servings

Rinse and trim, allowing 3 inches of green:
3 bunches scallions
Place them in a heavy skillet with:
½ cup boiling water
2 tablespoons butter
Cook covered until nearly tender, about 5 minutes. Drain well. Place them in rows on:
4 very thin slices toast
Season with:
Salt and freshly grated white pepper or nutmeg
Pour over them:
Melted butter, Cheese Sauce, 342, or Hollandaise Sauce, 358
Or cut the onions into small pieces, cook them and combine them with other cooked vegetables —peas, beans, or new potatoes.

WHOLE BAKED ONIONS

I. Preheat oven to 375°.
Wash:
Medium-sized onions: 8 oz. each
Bake on a rack in a pan above ¼ inch water about 1½ hours. Cut a slice from the root end. Discard the outer shells. Pour over the onions:
Melted butter
Season with:
Salt and paprika
Cover with:
(Grated Parmesan cheese or chopped parsley)

II. ⊟ Cook, as you would potatoes, in a bed of coals about 45 minutes:
Whole onions
The outer skin forms a protection. When the onions are tender, puncture the skin to let the steam escape. Scoop out the centers and serve with:
Salt and pepper

SAUTÉED ONIONS

2 Servings

These can be useful also as a garnish for a greater number than two.
Skin:
4 medium-sized onions
Cut them into very thin slices or chop them. Melt in a skillet:
2 tablespoons butter or bacon drippings
Add the onions and sauté until golden brown. Stir frequently to prevent burning. Before serving, season with:
Salt
(Worcestershire sauce)

SMALL BRAISED ONIONS

Skin:
Small onions
Pour over them to the depth of ½ inch:
Boiling stock
Simmer covered over low heat. Let them absorb the liquid until they are tender, about 25 minutes. Add additional stock if necessary. When the onions are almost tender:
Season to taste
and add:
(Seeded white raisins)

GLAZED ONIONS

4 Servings

Boon companions for a pork roast.
Skin:
12 small onions
Prick them through the center and place them on a rack above:
1 inch boiling water
Cook covered until nearly tender, about 25 minutes. Dry on paper toweling. Melt:
¼ cup butter
Add:
½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons brown sugar

Figure 14. Rombauer, Irma S. and Becker, Marion Rombauer. *Joy of Cooking*. Illus. Ginnie Hofmann and Ikki Matsumoto. New York: the Penguin Group, 1975. Page 312. Print.

Hold it to the light
Look closely



Figure 15. Ashley Culver, *Citrus sinensis Page 11*, photograph, 2015.



Figure 16. Ashley Culver, *Allium cepa Page 11*, photograph, 2015.

This

This, throughout the text, is referring to that which is other than the self. For me *this* is a singular thing. As one reads the text *this* can be replaced by the name of a noun. The most accurate reading in the context of the paired exhibition *Orange Peel and Onion Skin* would be to replace *this* with navel orange peel and red onion skin. *This* refers to a singularly present thing in each body of work or art piece. As singular things, they do not interact and are not compared. *Orange Peels and Onion Skins* points to two things. It is a parallel investigation of two particular, related things.

This is a particular. As mentioned, navel orange peel and red onion skin is *this*. However, *this* is not generalizable to peels. Peel is too broad to propose any interest. Peel is a category rather than a thing. Navel orange peel and red onion skin are specific. This is pointing to a specific, even an individual thing. Poet and philosopher, Jan Zwicky in *Wisdom and Metaphor* illustrates the particularity of *this*,

> Ontological attention is a response to particularity: *this* porch, *this* laundry basket, *this* day. Its object cannot be substituted for, even when it is an object of considerable generality ('the country', 'cheese', 'garage sale'). It is the antithesis of the attitude that regards things as 'resources', mere means to human ends. In perceiving *this*ness, we respond to having been addressed. (In fact we are addressed all the time, but we don't always notice *this*.)
> (52)

This is personal. To be personal means *this* is subjective as opposed to objective, which implies feelings are involved. For something to be *this* I must care. I like *this*. If I allow myself to experience *this* I cannot be cool detached or indifferent. No not at all it is emotional more notably my emotions. *This* is my experience, understanding, and joy for a particular thing.

This is relational. A relation forms between *this* and myself. The established traits of a thing and my personal preference sway the occurrence of a moment, a flash, a recognition of *this*. The established traits are already present in *this* and will continue to be present with or without my recognition of them. An orange is a sphere of a certain medium diameter. I move about the world with formal preferences. I am more inclined to notice something based on these preferences. I am attracted to texture, pattern, and form. When shopping I touch the fruit. Pick it up and hold an orange. I feel how it fits in my hand -how large navel oranges make my hand stretch to grasp it. My fingers spread out, remembering piano practice as a girl, reaching for the chords. My artwork

begins with an encounter with something. Through my experience with something I relate to the world or other people. My relationship with a thing is what leads to my artwork.

This is political. To encounter *this* requires a willingness to give attention with care to a thing or other outside of myself. The attention with care needed also encourages empathy. The title of one of Francis Ponge's books of poetry, *Siding with Things,* articulates the nature of attention with care. Ponge is a French poet whose writing observes and admires particular things. His poem *The Orange* appears in Figure 11 and 12. *Siding with Things* shows Ponge is choosing to identify with the thing. Tim Lilburn, similarly to Ponge, discusses attention with care. Lilburn is a close peer of Zwicky's. In the foreword of *Moosewood Sandhills* Lilburn writes, "Looking with care and desire seemed a political act." (9). Desire denotes value. Attention with care and desire is a way of being and interacting with things and other individuals. A way of being in the world is political.

This is beautiful, meaningful, truthful and significant. Through observing and working with an object I can discuss concepts and ideas as well as offer formal aesthetic expressions.

> *This*ness is the experience of a distinct thing in such way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it.
> Each *this* focuses that resonant structure in a distinct way. But the structure so focused is-of course-always the same. There is only one world.
> The ontology of *this*ness, of ontological attention and address, has the character of metaphor: its object is, and is not, everything.
> (Zwicky 55)

> First, beauty is scared. …Second, beauty is unprecedented. … These first and second attributes of beauty are very close to one another, for to say that something is "scared" is also to say either "it has no precedent" or "it has as its only precedent that which is itself unprecedented." But there is also a third feature: beauty is lifesaving. …beauty has a fourth feature: it incites deliberation.
> (Scarry 23-28)

As Zwicky relates *thisness* to metaphor I understand how *this* offers meaningfulness when I encounter *thisness*. Additionally, I find *this* and beauty related. All of the qualities Elaine Scarry outlines about beauty: scared, unprecedented, lifesaving, and inciting deliberation, can be said on behalf of *this* as well. Later Scarry connects beauty with truth and fairness as well. It is not a simple equation; yet, to draw lines between *this* and metaphor and beauty and truth strengthens each.

I Love *This*[1]

To accept
To acknowledge
To admire
To adore
To appreciate
To be attached to
To be attracted to
To be awestruck by
To be captivated with
To be charmed by
To be compassionate towards
To be concerned for
To be devoted to
To be enamored with
To be engaged with
To be engrossed with
To be enthralled by
To be entranced by
To be fascinated by
To be generous towards
To be gentle towards
To be infatuated with
To be intrigued by
To be kind to

---

[1] The section "I Love *This*" is a riff in response to Richard Serra's Essay on Sculpture a continuation of Verb List: Actions to Relate to Oneself (1967-1968). Serra's essay consists of verbs that are actions to manipulate material. For example, "TO ROLL" (Serra 378) is the first verb listed. My list matches the length of Serra' in length; however, none of our verbs are identical. His list emphasizes the artists handling the material by describing the physical process. My list consists of verbs describing the emotional relationship between the artist and *this*. I feel there is an emotional and physical aspect to each of our work. From Serra's work I can speculate he loved metal as I love *this*. My speculation is based on Serra's dedication to his chosen material over his lifetime. An artist' attention to particular material and subject denotes a love. By choosing to work with and depict a particular material and subject an artist is giving attention to *this.* Zwicky states,

> Ontological attention is a form of love.
> When we love a thing, we can experience our responsibility toward it as limitless (the size of the world). Responsibility is the trace, in us, of the pressure of the world that is focused in a *thi*s. That is *how much* it is possible to attend; that is how large complex attention would be.
> (Zwicky 57)

The list of verbs composing the section echoes the sentiment I love *this*.

To be mesmerized by
To be moved by
To be obsessed with
To be partial towards
To be pleased with
To be preoccupied with
To be smitten with
To be spellbound by
To be stunned by
To be thoughtful towards
To care for
To cherish
To cling to
To connect with
To converse with
To covet
To crave
To crush on
To delight in
To desire
To empathize
To endorse
To fall for
To fancy
To favor
To find importance in
To find meaning in
To find significance in
To focus on
To give attention to
To glorify
To guard
To have affections for
To have fondness for
To have intense feelings for
To have tenderness for
To have warmth for
To hold dear
To honor
To long for
To lust
To praise
To prize
To protect
To recognize
To relate to
To respect
To revere
To seduce
To side with
To sympathize with
To take interest in
To treasure
To understand
To uphold
To value
To want
To wish for
To yearn

To See *This*

The act of looking is constant, a continuous sifting through visual stimulus. Looking is often a passive moving through the world. To see *this* moves the act of everyday looking beyond passibity. To see *this* is to connect. "In perceiving *this*ness, we respond to having been addressed." (Zwicky 52) Rather than the world washing over us and happening without us, we engage. It is a difference in presences and openness. Looking is to seeing as speaking is to listening. We are attuned with *this*.

To see *this* means an alteration of my understanding and perception. The alteration is a correction in my failure to see. Previously, I did not give significance to *this* and now I do. *This*, which is familiar but unnoticed, becomes something seen. It becomes beautiful. It becomes meaningful. It becomes intriguing. Yet *this* always was a beautiful, meaningful, intriguing something. It is me—the viewer, the seer—who undergoes the process of shifting. "We can understand the state in which we are confused as aspect-*blindness*; a mistake; a *failure* to see what *is there*. (A failure: so the account is not reductionist. What is *there*, independently of our perception of it: so the account is not idealist.)" (Zwicky 25). The recognition of a failure on my part as opposed to a change in *this* gives understanding to my role. I can respond to, be attuned to, and give attention to *this* but I do not create *this*. I am not the author or maker of *this*. *This* exists with and without me.

To see *this* occurs in an instant, a flash. In a moment I see *this* and simultaneously forget the nothingness *this* was to me prior. Like cooking, it's a process that is terribly difficult to reverse, if not irreversible. The weight of *thisness* hits hard and fast and the correction in perception sticks.

> But the *experience* of *this*ness is not of a complex series of relations shading off into the temporally hazy distance. Rather, we are pierced. The *this* strikes into us like a shaft of light. We are focused by it, and experience it as focused: what is *this* is unique, it has an utterly distinct - and here notice the sense modality we reach for – flavor or fragrance.
> (Zwicky 53)

> Those who remember making an error about beauty usually also recall the exact second when they first realized they had made an error. The revisionary moment comes as a perceptual slap or slam that itself has emphatic sensory properties. Emily Dickinson's poem
>
> > It dropped so low – in my Regard-
> > I heard it hit the Ground-
>
> In an instance. A correction in perception takes place as an abrasive crash. Though it has the sound of breaking plates, what is shattering loudly is the perception itself:

It dropped so low – in my Regard-
I heard it hit the Ground-
And go to pieces on the Stones
At bottom of my mind-

The concussion is not just acoustic but kinesthetic. Her own brain is the floor against which the felt impact takes place.
(Scarry 12)

This is an encounter of great speed. Zwicky, Scarry, and Dickinson implore similes containing lighting, slapping, crashing, and breaking. These are aggressive physical accounts that share rapid impact. One is sure to be altered after such an encounter.

To see *this* is to simply see *this*, although it's not truly simple at all. To get the thingness of *this* and what makes *this this*. The is-ism of *this*. All of which is difficult to pin down. Ever since reading Lawrence Weschler's account of Robert Irwin's life the title, a quote of Paul Valery, drifts through me: *To see is to forget the name of the thing one sees*. *This* is to see beyond my baseline knowing of something—it's name for instance—and encounter *this*.

To Want *This*

I want to be near *this thisness* that calls for proximity. I long to gaze at *this* unapologetically and peer closely. I set *this* atop my dresser so it can be seen everyday often. Seeking to grasp *this* I wish to be with, to be beside *this.* I ponder around and about *thisness* and reflect upon *this* trying to think through *this*. I stare at *this* till I am weary and my eyes express their soreness. I polish *this* till I can see the world peering in return at me. I want to touch the surface of *this* moving my fingers along *this,* finding its edges and contours.

I walk round *this* studying underneath and within. Thoroughly observing *thisness* I pop each cell to see what's inside *this.* I turn *this* over and set it on its side to examine every aspect. Finding *this*' boiling point I learn about *this* by scrutinizing and testing its' *thisness.*

I put *this* on my windowsill where it will receive light and I can easily find it. I tie thread around *this* and around my finger to link us. *This* beckons me. I wish to trace *this* and collect the traces of *this*. I like to preserve the *thisness* of *this* by immersing *this* in vinegar and pickling juice. I care for *this* and ensure it's never chipped. Writing of *this* prompts me to reminisce about *this*. I draw *this* and photograph, bronze cast, laminate, entomb, mummify, and embalm with gesso in hopes of conserving the *thisness*.

Foregrounding, Replicating, Sharing *This*

My work foregrounds *this* while being aware of the inability to capture *thisness* and is combined with the urge to replicate and share *this.* Though *this* is an encounter between a thing and myself my work allows for me to reflect in solitude as well as anticipate other individuals viewing in my work.
I do not intend to camouflage or disguise *this*; yet, stating *this thisness* is ridiculously hopeless. Explaining *this* would undo it. *This* dissolves as I try to untangle it. It becomes lackluster. Somehow by attempting to identify and naming the parts of *this* and their significance I empty it and still miss articulating the core. Zwicky describes the incapability to label *this*, which allows for a mysterious ambiguity,

> (What is important about the metaphor is that it recognizes the object as knowable, but neither visible nor graspable.)
> Often the experience also includes an awareness of not being able to give an account of the *this* – we can point, but not say. Even the name can seem hopelessly inadequate – clumsy, inert.
> (Zwicky 53)

As Zwicky says while I am aware of *this* I am also simultaneously aware of my lack of understanding of *this.* So while I may desire to thoroughly know *this* part of the attractiveness of *thisness* is its ungrasp ability.

My work foregrounds *this* rather than explains *this*. However, to encourage others is be attuned to *this* is feasible as well is to allude to *this* without stating *this*. I relate to Allen Ruppersberg's desire to gently show moments, experiences, and ideas in his work. He describes his objectives:

> I want to reveal the quality of a moment in passing. Where something is recognized and acknowledged but remains mysterious and undefined. You continue on your way, but have been subtly changed from that point on.
> I try to set up a network of ideas and emotions with only the tip showing. The major portion of the piece continues to whirl and ferment underneath, just as things do in the world at large.
> (Ruppersberg 112)

I want to allude to *this.* To introduce the possibility of such an encounter with a thing and to train us to see are intentions of my work.

While my work foregrounds *this* I feel a desire to make a replication of *this* and to share *this*. It may seem like a contradiction; however, the desire drives my practice. The desire urges me on. It is a fierce forceful urge the desire that makes me want to capture *this*.

I understand the desire of replications as admiration for *this* and replications aiming to be the best copy of the original. I only replicate what I am fond of. Thus the act of replication is flattery. Scarry describes the desire to replicate in *On Beauty and Being Just*,

> Wittgenstein says that when the eye sees something beautiful, the hand wants to draw it. Beauty brings copies of itself into being. It makes us draw it, take photographs of it, or describe it to other people. Sometimes it gives rise to exact replication and other times to resemblances and still other times to things whose connection to the original site of inspiration is unrecognizable.
> (Scarry 3)

Producing a replication is my response to an encounter with *this*. Once I fall for *this* I desire to make it or a copy of it or something of it or like it. An acute replication may capture the essence of *this*, the thingness of *this*, the *thisness* of *this*, or the visual features of *this*. In *Orange Peel and Onion Skin* I abandoned representing in a sens*e* in favour of the original. The artwork is made with the actual thing, either a navel orange peel or red onion skin. I still consider the artwork to be in the vein of replication and resemblances as I work with each thing as material. Isn't the closest, most accurate portrayal the original?

I develop approaches in response to the materiality of the object I am working with and use secondary materials suited to the object. For instance, in *Untitled (laminated onion skin)* (2015) the translucency of the red onion skin is accentuated by the choice of secondary materials and the use of light. This work is composed of several small fragments of red onion skin sealed between sheets of wax paper. There are tiny bubbles between the wax paper. The piece is installed in the window frame, which has the same dimensions. It is attached to the window frame with tape. The wax paper mimics the translucent nature of the red onion skin as well as other physical qualities, such as the thin crispness. Installing the work so that it is backlit with natural light employs one of the red onion skins' most alluring features. My work is about the object while working with the object. *This* is both the material and subject. *This* is the instigator.

Similar to the desire to replicate *this* I experience a wish to share *this.*

> Field Guide
> Once, in the cool blue middle of a lake,
> Up to my neck in that most precious element of all,
>
> I found a pale-gray, curled-upwards pigeon feather

> Floating on the tension of the water
>
> At the very instant when a dragonfly,
> Like a blue-green iridescent bobby pin,
>
> Hovered over it, then lit, and rested.
> That's all.
>
> I mention this in the same way that I fold the corner of a page
> in certain library books,
> so that the next reader will know
>
> where to look for the good parts.
> (Hoagland 68)

I really like *this* and I am attempting to convince others to join me. I have seen *this* and have fallen for *this*. Now I seek to share *this*. I do so because I am a social being and find significance in *this.* I unearthed beauty, meaning and value in seeing *this*. Perhaps others are operating with the same failure to see as I was. My work is an attempt to convey what I have seen in *this* and point to the error of seeing. In teaching one another how to see we will move through the world differently. Opening our eyes to *this.* A call for attentiveness.

Studio, Kitchen, Gallery, Public, Domestic, In-between

I encourage porousness between life and art. There is a betrayal of boundaries. Sometimes things operate in-between art and life. It is the crossover of *this,* which is intriguing. The porousness can be seen in both my activities and in the exhibition of *Orange Peel and Onion Skin*.

I am an artist who cooks and a cook who plays in the studio. I began working in kitchens the same year I began studying visual arts, although my interest in both cooking and making art preceded these formal credentials. I have been in the kitchen for the sake of employment, gathering friends and projects. Most recently I collaborated with Kika Thorne for *Supper.* (see Appendix A). Though the activities of cooking and making art differ greatly, for me they have common ground in terms of material. Having common ground causes a breaking down of boundaries. I am interested in food as a tangible object that has the ability to communicate emotions that are intangible, which can occur in the kitchen and studio. My previous experience leading commercial community-based kitchens equips me with insights and convictions.

The exhibition of *Orange Peel and Onion Skin* takes places in multiple sites. The work will be shown in Gales Gallery along with an off-site location at York University. *Untitled (laminated onion skin)* (2015) will be installed in the glass cube entrance, the off-site location, in the Theatre Building nearest the Technology Enhanced Building (TEL). I consider the entrance an in-between space. Following that the work will be exhibited in a domestic setting of my friends', Laura Anderson, Veronica Szkudlarek, and Rob Nicholls, basement suite in the coffin factory. The coffin factory is an old building in downtown Toronto that is currently houses artists and musicians in live/work apartments. *Orange Peel and Onion Skin* will be exhibited in their studio kitchen space. The work will be integrated into their domestic space. Viewers will be able to encounter the work in both public and domestic spaces. Exhibiting *Orange Peel and Onion Skin* in these multiple sites allows a testing of the work to see how it will function. It also encourages encounters of *this* with the work, particularly in the context of the off-site location and the domestic space.

Encounters



Figure 17

I punch the rising sweet dough. It takes the impact and deflates. Dividing the dough into sections I hand my peers each a lump instructing them it will make twenty cinnamon buns. It's Wednesday evening; one of the rare weekly rituals when all the camp staff—all sixteen of us—work together. The first Kraftwerk CD blares from the little player on the kitchen table. Jessie picked up the CD on her day off last week at the thrift shop in town. The microwave beeps. The butter is melted to a golden liquid. I go around pouring the butter and scooping brown sugar into pans. Sarah follows me spreading and mixing the two in each pan with her fingers till they cover the entire bottom with a gritty congealed surface. Stories are exchanged. It's dark out now and our kitchen glows with the only electric lights on nearby. We line the pans of cinnamon buns on the counter and cover them with tea towels. In the morning, if all goes well, they'll have doubled in size. Dishes are done. The work surfaces are scraped of dough and flour. We put our aprons in the wash bin and head out.



Figure 18



Figure 19

I push my thumb into the peel. Wiggling it, I manage to make an opening to begin removing the outer layer. As I pull the peel back it rips from itself, releasing a citrus burst into the air. I twist it, attempting to remove the peel in one piece from the flesh.

I am sitting on the counter while Grandma and Grandpa are in the kitchen cooking scrambled eggs. My parents are travelling. This is all I recall.

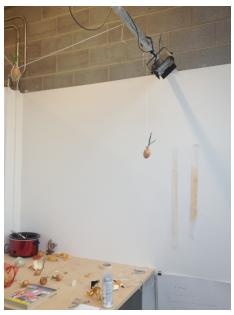


Figure 20

One tiny fragment of a red onion skin is pressed with packing tape onto 11" by 14" paper. The packing tape is stuck to the paper perfectly. There are no wrinkles. The red onion skin fragment fits within the width of the tape. Both are placed one third of the way down the paper. It is an object as an image.



Figure 21

Kika Thorne and I are prepping *Supper*. for our fellow graduate students. It's been snowing all week. It's winter and so we're cooking winter food; leek and potato soup. We've chopped the onions, garlic, potatoes, and thyme. The leeks are slender with the perfect gradient of white at the roots, growing into a fibrous, luscious green at the top. We wash the leeks well. How shall we chop the leeks? All the other ingredients are little petite cubes. I cut a few slices of one leek. It could work. The slices break apart into rings as I gather them. Kika cuts a one inch section. This is good. I can count the rings at the cut end like a tree. We continue chopping. Then I sauté the stump ends in the hot oil of the cast iron pan. Once they golden I add them to the slow cookers.



Figure 22

It's damp and the fog is at my ankles. There are white caps in the bay. I walk into the kitchen to start another day. All the campers are still in their bunks. It was their first night here. As I get set up to cook breakfast I decide the morning calls for hot chocolate.



Figure 23

Laura Anderson and I gaze at the heat lamp on the floor next to our table as we eat our avocado roll and spicy tuna roll. As the coil heats it reflects onto the concave metal disc behind it. Its warm orange glow expands from the centre to cover the entire disc. Then for a brief moment it's off and then its glow expands again. The orange reflection ebb and flows. The waitress comes over. "You like it?" "No, we love it"



Figure 24

It is thirty minutes till we open the doors and start serving dinner. Bodies and hot pans dance about the tiny kitchen. Eleanor is at the kitchen door; I didn't expect her tonight. She is not signed up to volunteer. I meet her. Eleanor gives me a 12" by 24" oil olive cake. It's a warm tungsten yellow. Eleanor explains she stopped by to give us the cake for dinner tonight; it's a traditional family recipe. I take the olive oil cake into the kitchen. This cake is a beautiful unexpected gesture.



Figure 25

I place the half sphere of a red onion skin on the page of the yellow pages phone book. I close the book. I open the book. The red onion skin is flat, with cracks noting the physical dimensional changes experienced.



Figure 26

Frankie, who is wearing hot pink head to toe with a pink parasol, describes how she would cook pumpkin to me. We are sitting in the dining room; across the street is Oppenheimer Park. First, scoop the seeds and such out. Put butter and brown sugar on the pumpkin. Before roasting the pumpkin poke holes through the flesh so the butter and brown sugar will ooze through. I place the tray on the ottoman in our living room. Granddad drags his armchair close so his knees touch the ottoman. My sister, brother and I crowd the ottoman on the other three sides. We watch as Granddad makes himself a cracker. Then it's our turn and we descend on the tray.



Figure 27

Via, Liz and Gay are leaning against the kitchen counter eating. Each of them with a bowl held close to their face spooning Kraft Dinner (KD) macaroni with fried Spam, well an assortment of canned meats—some Spam—into their mouths. Liz eats hers with ketchup. They've spent the last two hours preparing dinner and dessert for our bi-weekly dinner open to women in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. I pushed them hard, chopping boxes and boxes of yams to roast, washing lettuce for salad. Now the cooking is done and we get to chat and serve dinner for the next hour and a half. The initial rush of women coming in when the doors open has passed. Tessa walks up to the kitchen window and Liz greets her. When Tessa sees the KD she gives a delighted 'Hey yes!' She says KD feels like childhood. Approval of the meal from guests and volunteers is huge; this is what I work for. KD is always a hit as long as the noodles are not overcooked and the sauce is not too dry but not too runny either. Just right.



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30

I run the paintbrush over the dried orange peel with gesso.he paintbrush follows the curves. The gesso fills each dimple in the peel. The gesso soaks into the plinth. The next layer of gesso lies on top of the first, distancing me from the peel. The orange peel stains the gesso until several layers of gesso build up and a white silhouette of the peel is visible. The bright orange is hidden. The texture of the peel is also hidden, untouchable under the gesso. Instead subtle brushstrokes—which follow the concaves and bends of the peel—are visible. I paint another layer of gesso; the form of the dried orange peel is evident. I am satisfied—I can see the peel well. The gesso has muted the peel.



Figure 31

The skin slips off the peach in one piece. I cut the peach into quarters. Wedging and wiggling my paring knife I detach the quarters from the pit and place them into the quart jar. I am standing on a chair beside my Grandma and younger sister, also on a chair. The three of use are lined up at the kitchen sink. My brother is at the stove nearby; his job is to put the peaches into a small pot of boiling water then into the sink, which is full of cold water. I pick up another peach. It's lukewarm from the two water bathes. I remove the skin exposing the flesh, lovely hues of reds and oranges. I holler for my Mum, I've filled this mason jar so she whisks it away to put hot sugar water in it. The sugar water moves in and fills between the peach slices. We work steadily, the four of us. All the windows are closed, it's the first week of August, the stove and oven have been on all morning. We chat and mock each other but never slow down.

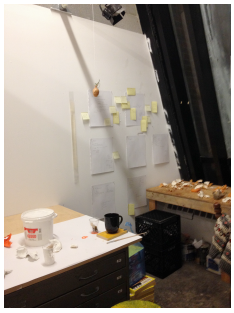


Figure 32

Avril flips the hunk of roast beef in front of me. "Cut against the grain," she instructs. I move my knife through the meat and feel the difference. The slice of roast beef slides to lay on the cutting board perpendicular its source. I peer closely at the slice for a quick second, looking for the grain. I see it. I continue to carve. Each slice falls onto the previous one, reforming the roast. I reach for another roast to carve once this one is done. And another one after that. Feeling my knife divide the



Figure 33

meat. By the fifth roast I have form.



Figure 34

The bronze is done cooling so I break the cast from the satin plaster. It worked! I hold the bronze cast in my hands and turn it over inspecting this new object. Someone looks over. “Was that hole in the peel?” they ask. I move my finger over the hole. I want to check—compare the dried orange peel with the cast bronze orange peel. But in an instant I realize a comparison is impossible. When the hot liquid bronze was poured into the cast earlier it burnt the wax funnel I constructed and flowed into the dried orange peel. The dried orange peel was burnt while the bronze took its place. The dried orange peel no longer exists. The closest representation the most actuate thing to that specific dried orange peel is the bronze cast I am holding. This was the peel.



Figure 35

Kika and I carry the slow cookers from my apartment to Goldfarb Building on-campus. Bundled in winter coats and scarves over our heads we each hold a four-quart slow cooker along with a tote bag full of kitchen equipment and ingredients. The cooker’s electrical cord is wrapped around my elbow so it doesn’t fling about. Fennel and potato ragout add a great deal of weight to the cookers. I try not to slosh it. I hold the first door open for Kika with my foot and she holds the next one. We tuck the slow cookers into the studio fridge for *Supper.* tomorrow.



Figure 36

When approaching the Centre for Film & Theatre Building from the direction of the Technology-Enhanced Learning Building on York University’s Keele campus there is an entrance that is a glass cube with two doors. The cube is constructed of large rectangular and square glass panes and blue metal rods. In each glass pane is a laminated sheet with red onion skin attached by tape at the top edge. They float and sway in the breeze and movement of passersby. The laminate echoes the translucent paper-like qualities of the red onion skin. It forms a double skin around the red onion skin sealing it off from the outside. The red onion skins are small fragments not touching each other. As I look at the laminated red onion skin the afternoon sun backlights them.

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Appendix A: *Supper.* Invitation

Supper.



FIG. 2

_____,
You are invited to dinner.
First meal is on us.
Subsequent meals pay what you can.
Bring your own drink and dishes.
Humble slow food,
eat together.

Location:

Date:

Time:

Edition ____

Dinner no. _

Notes

[i] The majority of *Encountering This; Orange Peel and Onion Skin* is devoted to attention given to the other. It is demonstrated in the first two sections. Following this attention is the focal point. The final two sections attention is still significant but moves to the background while consumption is in the foreground.

Encountering This; Orange Peel and Onion Skin begins by giving attention to orange peels and onion skins. The section *Orange Peel* along with the section *and Onion Skin* introduces the paper with an observational study of these two particular things. The sections are printed next to each other similarly to how the work focusing on orange peels and onion skins in the exhibition *Orange Peel and Onion Skin* are exhibited together. These things operate as a pair. The word 'and' joins them as a set instead of setting them as a comparison.

Attention is in the foreground of the sections *This, I Love This, To See This, To Want This* and *Foregrounding, Replicating, Sharing This*. These sections directly discuss way of being and giving attention of care to the other.

Studio, Kitchen, Gallery, Public, Domestic, In-between and *Encounters* speak to consumption along with attention. Each of these sections opens the paper to additional encounters besides myself and *this.* I anticipate viewers' consumption of my work in *Studio, Kitchen, Gallery, Public, Domestic, In-between*. *Encounters* gives accounts meeting *this* and other people. Attention is still in play here. Attention with care is at the core of my practice. It shapes my approach to things and others. *Encountering This; Orange Peel and Onion Skin* portrays my process.

[ii] *Encountering This; Orange Peel and Onion Skin* is not concerned with placing myself nor my work in the context of contemporary art rather the priority of the paper is attention and a way of being. My relationship and understanding of *this* is considered.

I am aware of my work's relation to art genres and mediums. My work can be discussed in terms of Eat Art, still life, relational aesthetics, and service media. It can also be considered in regards to sculpture and photography.

I place my work in relation to the thinking of Jan Zwicky, Elaine Scarry, Tim Lilburn, and Martin Heidegger along with their colleagues in *Encountering This; Orange Peel and Onion Skin*. These writers and thinkers are engaging with a conversation about ones' relation to the other. Zwicky, Scarry and Lilburn each speak to *this*; although, a different label may be given to *this* when addressing *thisness*. Heidegger appraises the thing. My work aligns with these writers and thinkers.