FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Sustainable Living

Sustained by Eating, Consumed by Eating Right: Reflections, Rhymes, Rants, and Recipes
Eric L. Ball
SUNY Press
978-1-4384-4624-0
(April 1, 2013)

With a special passion for the food of Crete, this author offers dissections of food and culture worth thinking about.

In his memoir, Eric Ball answers serious questions that everyone who claims involvement in the current food revolution should consider: What is the meaning of eating right? How much work will I do to have good food? Ball's inquiries, however, go beyond food and into issues of family, culture, and place. Throughout, his perspective is heartfelt, honest, and unique, and the lived-experience narrative of the recipes make this book stand out.

An associate professor of Cultural Studies at Empire State College, Ball is concerned with presenting himself as he authentically is. Particularly when dealing with family members, his elitism seeps through—a tendency he explicitly works on. Ball's sharing of honest recollections only makes the memoir better.

Having lived in Crete for several years, Ball considers Cretan food the best food in the world, and their culture, language, music, and approach to hospitality all of the highest order. As an academic, he deeply explores cultural questions surrounding these categories. His insights never waver from his foregone conclusion: though he was born and raised in New York, and though he moved back to his hometown, Crete is where he found himself.

Ball's wife, Sofia, shares her husband's passion for food. The two are committed to sourcing the best foods in order to enjoy the experience of preparing and eating their dishes. Merging sets of culinary experiences into one organically evolving and shared culinary adventure, as when they "began using chopsticks to eat dolmadakia made from North American wild grapevine leaves," is necessary. As in Crete, sharing food with family and friends remains among Ball's most pleasurable activities.

Numerous adventures, as the pair search for food, are chronicled. In the pursuit of real

food, Ball faces thoughts of his imminent demise at a mushroom hunt and potluck; another time he unknowingly risks feeding everyone poisonous water hemlock. Ball regularly endures long drives to multiple grocers to find his hard-to-source ingredients, and searches for Cretan wine and cuts of meat. The stories are clearly very personal to him but will offer commiseration for anyone struggling to achieve a similar lifestyle.

The truth is that not everyone is prepared to read a book like this because not everyone can imagine making choices about food with such mindfulness. But for those who find dissections of food and culture interesting and necessary, these pages offer much to think about.

Carrie Wallace