

The House of Sustenance

Food Memory Story/Poem

Nanny, I remember you
And your house of sustenance
We frequented
In in those carefree years.

Comforted by the billows of smoke
Which, through the carat-leafed roof of your tapia house
Lingered the aroma
Of mouth-watering curried cascadura.

I remember you squatting in your kitchen
As you turned the talkari in the big pot on the chula
Your reverence, in every ingredient
Now nourishes my memory

Of a dish as the native legend says
'Once you eat the cascadura
Wheresoever you may wander
Will end your days in Trinidad'.

The poem is about a distant, childhood food and family memory. Kath remembers the tapia house, a humble thatched-roof dwelling of her nanny's (hindi for maternal grandmother), where she ate talkari (hindi for a kind of dish) of curried cascadura (a kind of freshwater fish in Trinidad) cooked on a chula (hindi for an earthen fireplace).

By Kath Boodhai