

# The Ballad of Zoe + Josh

An unwritten recipe  
marked only by flour and fingerprints  
hints at The Baker to create a confectioner's treat  
something homemade and rather sweet  
to show her soul in solid form.

There are no words, only implications  
and the impulse of desire.  
Hire her and she will make you feel full, pull you in;  
her offerings will linger on the tongue  
and in the four chambers of your heart,  
which you didn't know was hungry.

And here you are, a 4-H Club star;  
your arm around the girl who's won at the Bake-A-Thon  
and holds a hundred blue ribbons.

If baking is truly "a science" and cooking, "an art,"  
her pastry is a living painting and we should all start  
by remembering that quote some famous chef once wrote:  
"Sift, knead, flute and flour"  
for this is the hour of feasting  
and we are in the hands of conjurors.

You take The Baker and The Baker's Man,  
put 'em together in an All-Clad pan.  
Combined, they are savory and long lasting.  
Fasting is prohibited!  
The prep work is complete.  
In place are all of the essential techniques.

So set the table and feed your collective soul.  
Don't forget to lick the bottom of the bowl.  
To taste is to commune, to eat is to share  
as we witness the rare and sparkled alchemy of The Baker,  
who's like an unexpected breeze washing over one's skin,  
and her Man, whose calm could hold back even the wind.

The dough is raised; the cake is glazed and ready.  
Hold steady and cook what you love.  
Love what you cook  
and always remember to look  
for the unwritten recipe.

Susan Hayden

Susan Hayden is a playwright, poet and fiction writer. She has read her work at numerous venues, including Beyond Baroque, Dutton's Bookstore and the Hotel Café in Hollywood. She is the creator/producer of Library Girl, a monthly literary series at the Ruskin Group Theatre in Santa Monica. Her essay *The Soul Section* was published in the critically-acclaimed anthology *The Black Body*, edited by Meri Danquah (Seven Stories Press). Her latest prose can be found on Jew-ish.com and in *Storie: All Write*, an Italian/American literary journal. Her writing has aired on KCRW and on KPFK's Pacifica Performance Series. Hayden's plays have been produced at the Met Theatre, South Coast Rep's Nexus Project and Padua Hills Playwrights to name a few. One of her plays was most recently honored by *Café Plays at the Ruskin* to be a part of *Best of Café Plays*. Susan is also a visual artist who uses words and images to create mixed-media montages. Her work has been featured at Bergamot Station's Schomburg Gallery. Susan lives near the beach with her fourteen year old son, Mason Summit, and an English bulldog named Ripley.

