

# CREATIVE WRITING



# & FOOD

A pamphlet of new work  
by members of *Women's Voices CIC*

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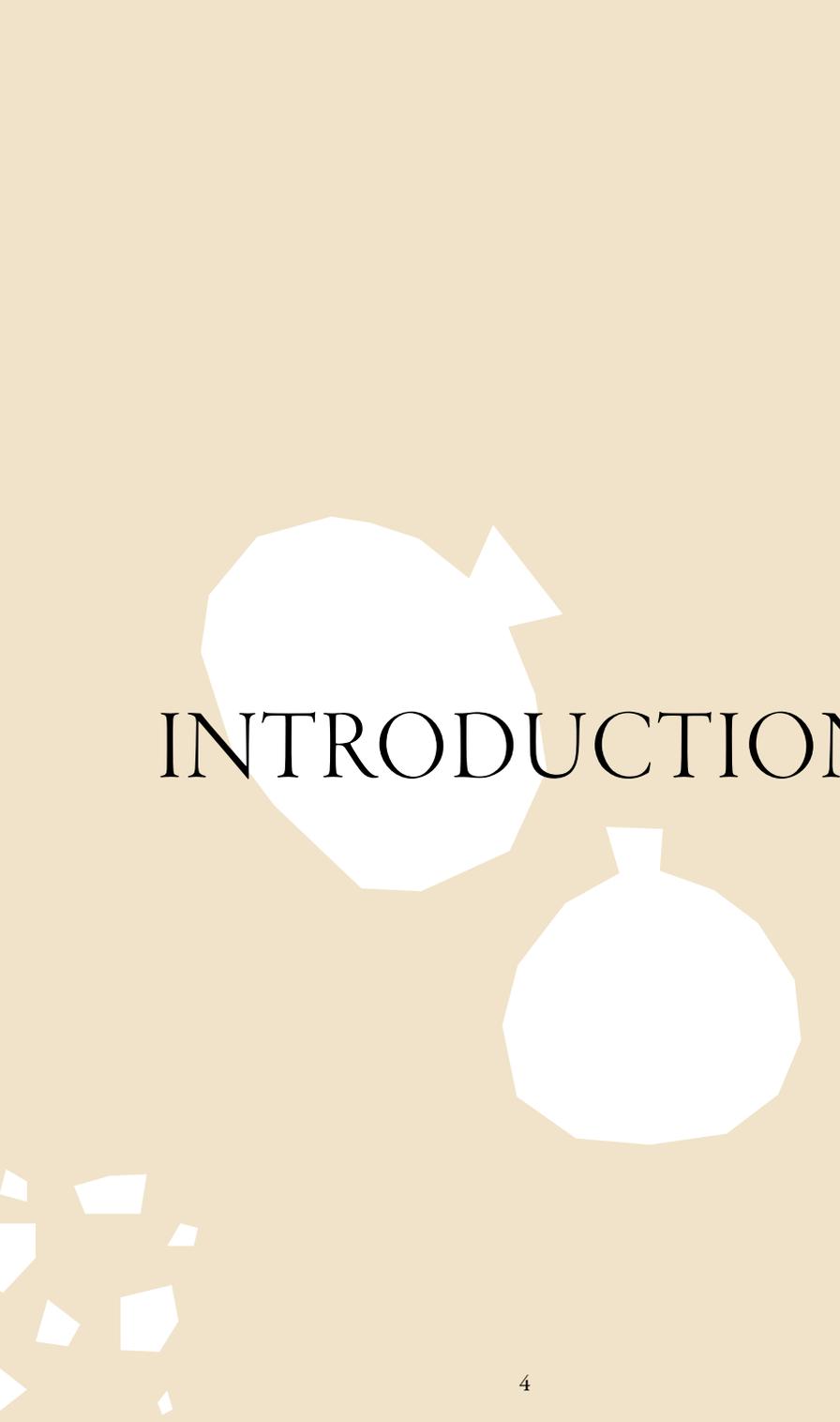
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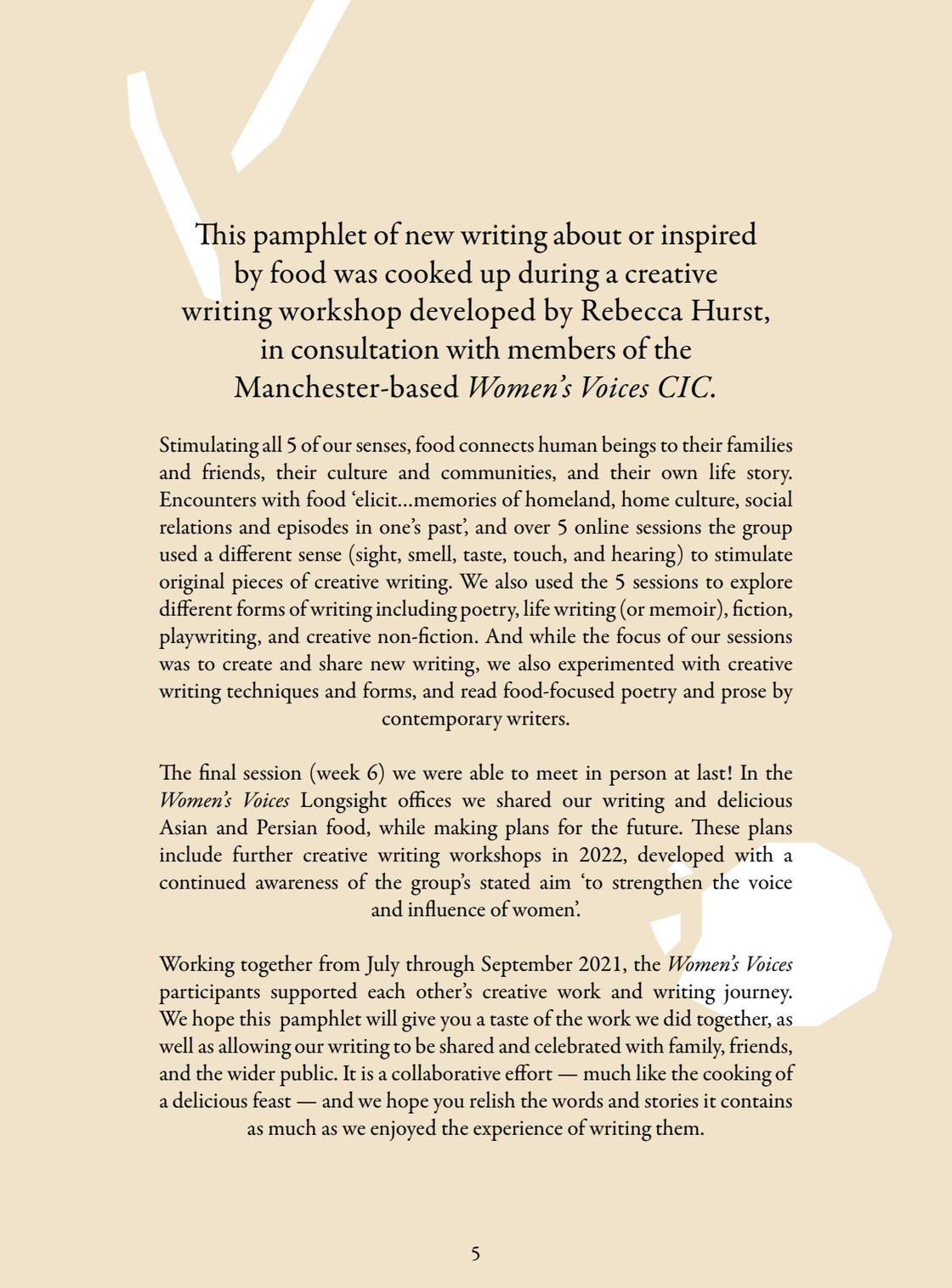
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# INTRODUCTION

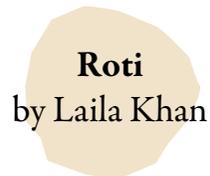


This pamphlet of new writing about or inspired by food was cooked up during a creative writing workshop developed by Rebecca Hurst, in consultation with members of the Manchester-based *Women's Voices CIC*.

Stimulating all 5 of our senses, food connects human beings to their families and friends, their culture and communities, and their own life story. Encounters with food 'elicit...memories of homeland, home culture, social relations and episodes in one's past', and over 5 online sessions the group used a different sense (sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing) to stimulate original pieces of creative writing. We also used the 5 sessions to explore different forms of writing including poetry, life writing (or memoir), fiction, playwriting, and creative non-fiction. And while the focus of our sessions was to create and share new writing, we also experimented with creative writing techniques and forms, and read food-focused poetry and prose by contemporary writers.

The final session (week 6) we were able to meet in person at last! In the *Women's Voices* Longsight offices we shared our writing and delicious Asian and Persian food, while making plans for the future. These plans include further creative writing workshops in 2022, developed with a continued awareness of the group's stated aim 'to strengthen the voice and influence of women'.

Working together from July through September 2021, the *Women's Voices* participants supported each other's creative work and writing journey. We hope this pamphlet will give you a taste of the work we did together, as well as allowing our writing to be shared and celebrated with family, friends, and the wider public. It is a collaborative effort — much like the cooking of a delicious feast — and we hope you relish the words and stories it contains as much as we enjoyed the experience of writing them.



**Roti**  
by Laila Khan

No one makes roti like my sister Uzma. Eating them reminds me of the first time my mum and I went to see her after her wedding. She was alone at home. She invited us for lunch.

Roti are made of flour, salt, yeast, and warm water. Uzma kneaded the dough, adding salt, yeast, and warm water. She then covered the pot and put it in sunlight in her small back yard, so it could rise and double in size. After two hours the dough was ready.

I had never seen the pan Uzma used to cook the roti. Her mother-in-law gave it to her and taught her how to use it. The pan was like an oven. The roti Uzma made were soft, fluffy, and yummy. She served them with salad and chutney, chicken curry, and ladyfinger curry.

I got so inspired, as that was the first time I had tasted roti cooked like that, smelling of yeast and feeling so soft. I got that special pan from Pakistan for myself, so that I could make roti too.



**Recipe of Myself**  
by Fahime

To make one Fahime you need: 2 kilograms of energy, 1 spoon of sweetness, 3 sprinkles of imagination, and 9 handfuls of chopped up power.

To make one Anna? You need to use your hands to mix the ingredients together with all your strength. Pour your energy inside the food, grate it all together, and garnish with a smile.

To make one Amin you will need 3 tons of kindness. Add some gentleness. Mix in gallons of hard work and knead to perfection. I said perfection! And don't forget the final ingredient: a big bunch of bananas!



## Life Writing by Hoori

### My Favourite Foods

I love ginger and garlic for two reasons. One reason is that they make food so good! Another reason is that they are good for you. Everybody in my family has cholesterol, and I use these two more than any other seasonings, and hope they are good for the health of my family.

### Food Memories

I also like food with fish, for example beans and rice with fried fish. Unfortunately, when I was pregnant, I hated the smell of fish. So I didn't cook it. But one day I went to my mother-in-law's house and she made a fish dish, and I was sick and vomited.

Now I remember that time and life whenever I see fish or any fish dish. I remember when my sons were children and it feels good.

### Morning Thoughts

In the morning I open the window and smile. It is very nice outside because it rained during the night. I watch the birds. They are waiting for food, and I take food to them and then enjoy watching them eat. Watching the birds eating food reminds me of eating food in my own kitchen. Everybody on the planet, I think, is similar.



## Garlic by Jila Mozoun

It grows in the autumn. It grows quickly.  
When I put part of it in the soil  
everybody asked, what are you doing?  
I told them, please wait. I will tell you in a few weeks.

Later, when I harvested it, there was an amazing smell.  
I think you can use it when the leaves are growing  
in soup or some kind of food. The leaves are green  
but the root is white. It's used in many foods.

It is strong to smell. When you eat it fresh  
it is a little bit hot. When I hold it in my hand  
I remember my childhood; my mother and grandmother  
used it in many foods. Its name is — garlic.



## Shole Mash: Life Writing

by Jila Mozoun

I think smells in the kitchen remind you of the past. Grandmother and father. Childhood. And they give you some good memories. I felt at peace. Maybe because when you're a child your world is small. Just sleep, play, eat. You don't think about the future — but with family (mother, father, sisters, brother) you enjoy time without any thoughts. Family does the thinking instead of you. But you couldn't understand that.

In winter 1970, a big snow fell on my city. Huge piles of snow were on the roof and every landlord must clean that up. My father went to shovel the snow. The weather was very cold. He wore many clothes and went onto the roof. My mother made a special food for that time of cold, snowy weather. She boiled mung beans in a big pot. After they were cooked she added rice and oil, a little bit of salt, and some gravy (chicken or lamb), like a hearty soup. I heard my father say, 'Gilan, is it ready?' Mother said, 'Yes, come down, warm food is ready.' I was so happy for food and snow.

Now, every time I make it—shole mash—I hear my parents' voices. Cooking this dish, I am connected with family by the cold winter, and by sound and smell. Shole mash is ready!



**Best Friends**  
by Laila Khan

My best friend in the kitchen is the kettle.  
It makes me think of pasta and boiled rice.  
When I see my best friend in the kitchen I feel relaxed and happy.  
It smells and tastes like hot, bubbly water and steam.

If it could understand me I would tell it: "Thank you for being there. I can't imagine my life without you. You're always a reliable friend that helps me make dinner and lunch faster for my family. Thank you for always being there like a good friend."



**Best Friends**  
by Samaneh Nobakht

My best friends in the kitchen are Salt and Pepper.  
They remind me of a brother and sister who are never separated from each other.

When I wake up in the morning and want to start cooking, I look at them and think to myself. Then I tell my friends, 'Guys we can work together as a team and make delicious food with confidence today.'

Their smells and tastes are like good or bad days. Just as different things happen in our lives, so they can change my taste of food in a good way or bad way. That's why I make friends with them, so they will look after me when I'm cooking.

If they could understand me I would tell them never to leave each other, and to protect my body and keep it healthy, please.

## Acknowledgements

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A pamphlet of new work by members of *Women's Voices CIC*.  
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