

Much emphasis, too, has been laid on decoration. There are moments when the account of the day, or of a single room and its function, descend into a catalogue, neither entertaining nor arresting, but they do have a nice eye for some particular event or action such as the boy falling into the porridge pot on the fire, or rumpy pumpy among the servants at the close of day. Some of this suffers from an excess of theoretical enthusiasm, but there is too a plethora of facts, enough for the keenest reader.

Ken Albala: *Noodle Soup: Recipes, Techniques, Obsession*: University of Illinois Press, 2018: 186 pp., paperback, £16.99.

The energy of Ken Albala is breathtaking. If he's not editing a series here, organizing a conference there, undertaking a world tour of gastronomic symposia everywhere, or just teaching his students back home in Stockton, California, he's spending the last three years devising, cooking and eating a new noodle soup every day. This is the book: the history, the whys and the wherefores, then the recipes – some old, some classic, some new and entirely of his own invention – and photographs to prove it. Bravo! Perhaps this winter we should throw out the toaster and start simmering the stock: begone, dull colds, now is the time puff out the chest and slurp for good health.