RISOTTO WITH CELERY

When working with this recipe, do not discard all the leafy celery tops because some will be cooked with the risotto from the start to intensify the celery aroma. Part of the stalk goes in later so that it can retain some of its textural interest.

SERVES 4

2 litres/2 quarts
broth

1 tablespoon chopped leafy tops of the celery heart

salt

450 g/1 lb butter

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

85 g/3 oz chopped onion

1 bunch celery sticks, very finely diced

1. Bring the broth to a very slow, steady simmer on a burner near where you'll be cooking the risotto.

2. Put 25 g/1 oz butter, all the vegetable oil and the chopped onion in a broad, sturdy pot, turn the heat to medium-high, and sauté the onion until it becomes transparent, then add half of the diced celery sticks, all the chopped leaves and a pinch of salt. Cook for 2 or 3 minutes, stirring frequently to coat the celery well.

3. Add the rice and stir quickly and thoroughly until the grains are well coated. Add 100 mL/4 fl oz simmering broth and cook the rice following the directions in steps 2 and 3 of the basic white risotto recipe on page 261.

4. When the rice has cooked for 10 minutes, add the remaining diced celery, and continue to stir and add broth as needed, a little at a time.

5. Cook the rice until it is tender but firm to the bite, with barely enough liquid remaining to make the consistency somewhat runny. Off the heat, add a few grindings of pepper, the remaining butter and all the grated Parmesan, and stir thoroughly until the cheese melts and clings to the rice. Taste and correct for salt. Mix in the chopped parsley. Transfer to a platter and serve promptly.
Jake wrapped his arms around Gordon and lifted him onto his lap. Gordon leaned back into his arms. “You bring me in, little one,” Jake said. “You help me find it.”

Gordon had no idea of what he was supposed to find. “Now take a deep breath. Now take another. At your own speed now,” he was instructed. Gordon dropped his head back to Jake’s shoulder. He sat as deeply as he could and felt a cold weightlessness rise from his bowels and balloon into his head. He froze for a brief moment, and Jake smoothed the gooseflesh that had risen on his arms. Gordon felt as if he were opening up into nothing at all, that there was no difference between the cock inside him and his own in Jake’s fist; but it scared him that what distinguished his inside from his outside had dissolved. He was hovering over that spot; a part of his body, not an inch thick, had exploded into consciousness a mile wide. He wanted the feeling to stop, and he didn’t, the way you watch something valuable fall and break even though you might have moved fast enough to catch it, the way you stay with physical pain, experience it like a car ride, because there is nothing that can be done about it. He pushed his head into the crotch of Jake’s throat; he sat down even deeper into Jake’s lap, forcing the sensation, the distance between the physical and the not. And he began to rock. The Gregorian chant was coming into the bedroom through hidden speakers. “In thee I place my trust,” the chorus sang. “I shall not perish. My foes shall not mock me.”

Jake fell asleep after he came; his cock grew soft and slipped out of Gordon’s body. Gordon would have gotten out of bed and walked through a dressing room into the bath, to wash and to explore the house. He lowered the light on the dimmer switch as low as it could go and he could still see. From a hook behind the door, he took a hooded bathrobe, which made him look like a monk. He sang into the mirror, “Et cerni Lazaro et in aula terrae ut cum autem habebas requiem.”