

Marmalade

'Best do no more than 2lb oranges at a time
even in big pan' Kim has written on a crocus yellow notelet,
passing the recipe down another generation.

Her father used to make marmalade too.
The last jars were one of the few things we took
from his frugal cupboards when he died
and ate thoughtfully through the year.

Kim delighted in the seasonal appearance of Seville oranges,
lasting only a week or two like exotic migrant birds,
cheering January with a glimpse of sunny Spanish groves.

A new year ritual, storing sweetness for the year ahead.
The jam pan seething with molten amber,
drips of condensation on the kitchen ceiling
and running down the winter windows.

'My way to test is to put a plate in the
fridge and make it cold, then drop a couple
of drops on it, let them cool slightly, then
push with finger – if it wrinkles it is
ready'

This year I made my own
and sent Kim a row of oranges emojis to share my satisfaction.
Two months later she had died
and her last jars are in my cupboard
'Seville Orange Marmalade 2023' in her neat hand.

When the new year comes again
I will get out Kim's recipe,
boil oranges, chop peel and fill jars
bittersweet.