

without any preparation. and if i do want something hot, or even if it's just a cold sandwich, i go out and pick it up at the deli, or a diner someplace. i used to invite people over for dinner, and when i did i'd go out of my way to really put together a fine meal. but those days are over. in fact, they ended a lot earlier than last week when i gave up cooking altogether. one consequence of this naturally is that i find myself getting invited out to eat less and less. this i find doesn't bother me though, since sitting at a table eating in the midst of conversation was only serving to give me indigestion. i don't know how many times i had to leave a dinner early because of this. so, now i eat alone every night, and i do so standing at the counter next to the fridge, and maybe a meal will consist of nothing more than a slice of cheese and some celery, and then for dessert i'll have an orange, or maybe a few chunks of pineapple. i can go on like this for days. and i notice that when an urge for something more ambitious hits me i can usually satisfy myself with a slice of pizza. yes, i am becoming very thin. just recently i had to put another hole in my belt. when i stop in to visit my parents i can see that worried look in my mother's eyes. she always puts out an enormous meal when i'm there, hoping to fatten and strengthen me. and then she'll make sure i leave with enough leftovers for two, three days. i notice she never lets my father see her giving me these leftovers. maybe, in his mind, if i get thin enough i'll come around to marrying that good italian girl he's always telling me about. and i'm sure there are a lot of good italian girls out there, but until the right one comes along i'm going to have to be satisfied with simply eating a tomato with a little salt on it.

EXOTIC JAPANESE

exotic japanese pens all over the table and i never use them. i don't know why i keep buying them. perhaps it is because they seem so cheap considering how very swank they are. i prefer writing with a plain yellow pencil, #2 soft. and it's not just because

it enables me to erase, no. i think i just feel at home with one. i've known these yellow pencils since childhood. sometimes i'll just pick up one of the japanese pens to give them a whirl and most times when i do this it seems as though the pen is fighting me. i swear, usually i get the message it wants nothing to do with either me or the page. especially the one from sakura; it's like trying to write with an unruly sewing needle. but, i keep them around nonetheless. the best thing to do with them is to simply hold one at a time; take the cap off of it and then put it back on; inspect the smart clip on it; notice how everything works so flawlessly. there are never any messy points, say, like on a bic pen. bic pens always have runny noses. and this, i confess, i cannot stand, and so i don't use them either. in fact, i won't even own one since they are not even pleasant to look at. and they're sold by the dozen usually, which i find repulsive and disconcerting. what would i ever want with twelve ugly pens with runny noses? to get back to the japanese pens: sometimes too i purchase one just so that i can walk around with it clipped into my shirt pocket. it's a very handsome piece of jewelry as far as i'm concerned, for little more than a dollar. and since i can't afford a new japanese car i figure this is a decent substitute. the biggest charge came last week when i was at the supermarket and this lovely woman whom i happened to be speaking with asked me if i had a pen that she might borrow. i can't tell you how much ahead of the rest of the herd i felt when i pulled out my completely full and very spiffy pen from sakura and handed it to her. i had no fear when she took the cap off that there would be any greasy blue snots on the nose, the point. and of course there weren't. and when she mentioned to me what a nice color the ink was i had to look over at it to see exactly what color she was talking about since i had never myself used the pen. and beautiful it was, yes, my god. it was pure turquoise, of all colors, my favorite. what made it all the more magnificent too was that this lovely woman had to go with this turquoise ink such wild unbelievably lively red hair, so red and so wild as to be able to make a candy cane bleed.

INSECURE

i've had a key on my key chain now
for over a year and i don't know
what it's for

and i'm afraid
to take it off