

## KIWIS AND LEMONS

By

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Unless you're given to metaphorical reflection, it's unlikely you'd compare life to any type of fruit. Then there's me; I'm accused regularly of thinking a bit off center.

One morning as I was arranging kiwis and lemons in a crystal bowl, it dawned on me that life closely parallels the attributes of these divergent fruits.

First, one almost never sees them gathered together in a display. But when I nestle them in concert, I see them as contrasting and complementary. The lemon is cheeky and bold; the greenish hue of the kiwi peeks through a russet brown, deceptively timid.

A kiwi can be intimidating. Although hope springs from the light green tincture of the fruit, the skin is hairy and inedible, yet you have to touch it to get to the substance, the soul.

It takes faith to slice through snarky. Beneath lies a satisfying sweet fruit, redolent with splendor. If you garner the courage, the payoff is dulcet and the price is de minimis. Granted, there are a few black seeds but you barely notice them, save once in a while when an erstwhile stray gets stuck in your teeth. It takes audacity to search for the sweetness in life. Not allowing an errant cloud to spoil a sunny day akin to ignoring the seeds.

Lemons are outwardly beautiful. Their skin is smooth and, let's face it...it takes certain mettle to wear bright yellow. A specific, "look at me I'm beautiful" confidence. I've always admired that about lemons.

The rind of a lemon is tough. When it gives way to a sharp knife, the flesh looks appealing. Pale and juicy it tempts. Bite and your mouth puckers violently. Tart and bitter battle over your taste buds but you fight through it.

Beauty is a magnet we're all drawn to. Early on, we learn the bitterness of lemon, yet the pucker provokes us to improve the flavor; add some sugar, make lemonade.

My husband and I built a dream life together, but didn't find happiness. It was grandiose to the naked eye, but eventually the pungent flesh beneath the rind couldn't be sweetened. No amount of apology could forgive the sin. Eventually the bitter taste subsided... I got through it.

On my own, I devised a far less grand existence. A diminished life style is easy to pass by, there's no shine to the surface. But risk has reward and substance begets merit. I've found sweetness beneath the facade.

Lemons are more common than kiwi. They both grow on trees, but there are far fewer kiwi farms than citrus groves. Lemons are plentiful; we find them everywhere, every season.

We age into knowing that there will always be both. In spite of the pucker we need lemons for flavor – a squeeze over veal, a slice in sweet tea. Lemons provide a sense of purpose; the will to make things better.

A kiwi stands alone; waiting for the wisdom of one who seeks a slice of heaven. You'll need courage for the hunt and guts to pierce the skin in search of the substantive.

Arranging them now I wonder if all our lives are a little of each. They're equally decorative and utilitarian.

Kiwi and lemons...sweet and sour slices of life. They go well together in a bowl, I think. More to the point, they look lovely on my kitchen table on a sober gray day.