

Hey Miss Pat

*A new monologue by Eve Ensler for Patricia Henry
and for the Katrina Warriors of New Orleans and the Gulf South*

They come to my gate
They holler at me;
“Hey Miss Pat
Whatcha cooking?”
They do it every day.
They know I can’t cook a little.
I cook for everyone. I cook a lot.

Just now it was the mother of that big boy
Who caught asthma in the trailer
From all that **femaldehyde**.
Those trailers weren’t meant for more than 20 minutes
And they certainly can’t hold no big people.
Poor woman, she worried worried tired.
I cooked her up some fried fish and some dirty rice.

New Orleans ain’t what it was
Used to be Bingo
Used to be Walmarts open 24/7
You could shop at midnight or 1 am
Used to have lay ways
Every time you got your little money
You could pay some things off
Now no ones saving up for any future.

“Hey miss Pat
Whatcha cooking?”
I hear this little voice
“I know you have something for me to eat”
They found her mama dead last week
Only 29
They said she died of complications
But that’s what they say now
When someone kills themselves
Her poor mother was never right after the flood
I heard she drank cleaning fluid.

If I wasn’t born here, I swear I would pick up and leave
My daughter is a single parent
The more she works the less she has
She can’t pay the bills
And buy the class ring for her daughter
or a gown for the prom
I be feeling bad
But I push it aside

“Hey Miss Pat
Whatcha cooking?”
That’s my best friend Mary.
She helps me cook sometimes.
I think it keeps her mind off things.
We’re making sandwiches today for
The folks walking past in the second line
They’re killing my friend Mary
Trying to run her out of here

They call it Fuel adjustment. They charge her so much a month. But she doesn't have gas. They took the gas meter out.

My husband is in construction
He doesn't get work much now
It's the rain or all the men they bought in cheap
from out of town.
He holds up this ragged sign all day and sells pecans,
a dollar a bag.
Its made him someone else. It took away his man

Most taxi drivers won't bring folks to our street
They say they could get shot or killed
So I wonder what that makes me
A person who is bullet proof or already dead.

“Hey Miss Pat
Whatcha cooking?”
It's my pastor
He wants yakome soup
Noodles green onions beef soy sauce and eggs
His wife don't know how to make it
And she surely won't learn
I like my pastor happy and full
He preaches stronger

We fixed the roof of our little church
We fixed the floors
My pastor says we are going to make it through
He says this will make us better than before.

Hey Miss Pat
Whatcha cooking
I hear her calling me sometimes
Whispering crazy at my door
Miss Ruby who was 82 and ate up all my barbecued shrimp
I didn't mine cause she was rail thin
She didn't want to go no place else
Stayed too long up on her roof
The water took her away.
But she's here
Like the others
Whispering at my gate
Hey Miss Pat
Miss Pat
I'm hungry
I'm trying to get home.

You holler for me at the gate, okay
I'll get you something to eat
I'm cooking up a remedy
I'm cooking up some serious rage
I cooking up a levee that will hold
And a government that will care
I'm adding water and salt and
A pinch of defiance
I'm cooking up sorrow
And family
I'm cooking up gumbo okra jumbalaya mac and cheese
roast beef and resistance
I'm cooking up spices and ancestors

And a right and a way to stay in this place

I'm cooking

Oh I'm cooking

I'm cooking.