

Monday 8th September 2014

Dear Customer,

I hope all is well with you. Here is a little recipe you could try this week with your Liverpudlian cauliflower. Yet again, not much vegetable talk in this week's letter.

Cauliflower with Sesame Seeds and Ginger

1 cauliflower	1 tbsp honey
2 tbsp soy sauce	1 tbs vinegar
juice of ½ lemon	1 tbsp cornflour
1 tsp sesame oil	1 tbs olive oil
1 tsp fresh grated ginger	2 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
2 tbs sesame seeds	

Trim the cauliflower and cut into thin slices. Next, cut the florets away from the stalk and discard stalk. Steam for 5 minutes, refresh with water and set aside. In a bowl, mix together the honey, soy sauce, vinegar, lemon juice, cornflour and sesame oil. Set aside. Heat the olive oil in a pan and add the ginger, garlic and sesame seeds. Saute until the ginger and garlic begins to turn golden, then stir in the cauliflower. Toss the cauliflower to heat through in the honey-soy sauce mixture. Serve immediately.

The phone rang, it was my brother, he was up here from his house in London, and was going to call in on his way back from his house in Alston, en route to his house in Harrogate, having had a nice break in his house in Cornwall. He said he'd be with me in twenty minutes. Good. Enough time to hide everything. Normally, about once a year, he just appears on the doorstep with no warning. Presumably leaving his options open until the last second, which I 'get' as I'm the same. I barely recognised him as he'd lost weight and appears to have turned into a health freak, talking about fasting and cutting out carbohydrates, cycling every day and swimming. He looked amazing – he's a good looking brother. Myfa had a dodgy tummy so I had bought her some roast chicken that morning and offered to make him a sandwich with it but he asked if I had anything else – cheese maybe. I didn't dare ask him, but has he even gone vegetarian – he's never had a sandwich with no meat in, ever.... and he left the crusts – this was weird. We started talking business, music business. I took him out to the car to play him my crap songs with my crap voice onwhich he had only heard on the crap speakers of his laptop. My B & O speakers are blown and will cost £650 to repair hence having to go to the car. Finally he could hear the songs properly and I could see him out the corner of my eye, wiping away tears as we listened. The songs sounded brilliant. He agreed with me that if the publishers are getting better songs than this sent to them – we'd like to hear them. He said he still thought I should 'crisp up' the vocals on the first 2 lines of the new song. – he wasn't going to concede on that one.

A few weeks ago I got my old saxophone out of its case for the first time to see if I could still play. I couldn't, I didn't have the physical energy, it hurt my lips and dislocated my jaw so it went back in the case. I decided I would never play it again. But then faced with the prospect of paying a session musician to come and play one solitary sax break and an outro, when it had been my main instrument, I decided to go and buy a strap and new reeds. I didn't own a strap because when I was performing live, as I was also the singer, I had an elaborate, bespoke saxophone stand which stood on stage next to my mike stand, enabling me to go straight from vocals to saxophone without missing a beat, playing it in the stand - no time to hook it round my neck. So another dislocated jaw coming up this week.

We are busy working on finalising the Autumn / Winter Izzy Lane Collection which is late as usual. We have some gorgeous coats and skirts coming up ! It's panic to finish sampling and get the photo shoot done and patterns off to the manufacturers. My brain is a complete stew. Emails firing in, I fire a load out: the Galia melons not on the pallet, what are we going to replace them with ? - driver A has knocked down a customer's garden wall in Teddington, customer very nice about it, driver mortified - Ernest calls 2 sheep with fly strike, "it's me, I'm jinxed" so call vet to order insecticide and antibiotic - when are they coming to bale the hay ? think it's going to rain - decide out of 100 pics, which faux fur for the coat collar, they're all too real looking. Which looks least like fur ? – Big file download from producer in, listen to track, worried about a faint backing vocal on last chorus – On the jetted pockets they are domes with a self fabric loop coming out of the jet to fasten below, should we remove to simplify unless you've found a stud and dome button to match ? yes - has the VAT come in yet ?no - do I want 50 acres in Stratford on Avon for the sheep – is the fabric back from weavers ? no – is the coat sample back ? no – where's it gone ? – is Wensleydale back from dyers ? no – can I intern next summer for Izzy Lane ? she wouldn't want to – oh God there's a live export on Friday 9am - we've run out of olive oil – should the long fringed coat have shoulder pads ? no – worried about the lyric on 2nd verse last line, bugs me, need to rewrite it – asked to respond to British Wool Marketing Board's comments on my misquoted quotes, BWMB hate me already, ask journalist to see full copy to see if there were any other misquotes she wasn't telling me about as for Guardian - has the dog fur arrived yet (from Greenland) it's minus 40 here today ? no - is the newsletter ready yet ? no – texts pinging through with friends having a good day ☺, friends having a bad day ☹ - guinea pigs squeaking for dandelion leaves, Myfa whining for a walk – how many boxes of bananas ? – Should the buttons be 3cm or 4cm ? 4cm. I just want to get on with my song, just nip over to the piano for a minute while the kettle's boiling. Should it just go straight into the chorus at this point ? Yes, straight into the chorus.

I called for an Indian take away the other night. I said I just wanted to order some side dishes. There was a silence – then "15 side dishes ?" – "no, just 3" I said . I gave him my order and he asked my name. "Davies" I said. "Jesus ?" he said astonished. Yes, Jesus.

Wow, the Scottish referendum – the 'yes' vote are ahead in the polls. I don't have an opinion on whether it's in Scotland's interest to leave the Union, who knows, but if I lived there I'd definitely be voting 'yes'. I mean...how exciting !

Kind wishes,

Isobel

PS Just listened to my songs again on way back from office. Worried. They are sounding very average today.