After the Dinner Party

By Adrienne Su

Dropping napkins, corks, and non-compostables into the trash, I see that friends have mistaken my everyday chopsticks for disposables,

helpfully discarding them alongside inedibles: pork bones, shrimp shells, bitter melon. Among napkins and corks, they do look compostable:

off-white, wooden, warped from continual washing — no lacquer, no ornament. But anyone who thinks these chopsticks are disposable

doesn’t live with chopsticks in the comfortable way of a favorite robe, oversized, a bit broken. Thin paper napkins, plastic forks, and non-compostable takeout boxes constitute the chopstick’s natural habitat to many I hold dear. With family or alone, I’ll maintain that chopsticks aren’t disposable,

but if I can make peace with the loss of utensils when breaking bao with guests, I’ll be one of them, not digging in the napkins and corks. Compostable chopsticks are the answer: everyday and disposable.