

## “The Kitchen”

I'm in the kitchen. Again.  
This room with it's  
endless capacity.  
To Create. To Comfort.  
Provide Solace and Laughter.  
Sustenance and Memories.

Is everyone's life so  
centered in their kitchen?  
So deeply connected with the food  
made here, the memories, so  
much a part of their self?

In my mother's kitchen,  
I sat on a phone book, mesmerized  
by the Paas liquid rainbow  
before me in the assortment of  
jelly jars and glasses.  
Thin metal holders barely balanced  
the eggs as they were dipped and  
laid on cooling racks to dry.

In December, Anise cut outs announced  
the holiday season. They were rolled,  
cut and decorated on the third-generation  
cutting board that took up half  
the kitchen table. Flour dusted the board,  
covering wood darkened  
with age and use. In my kitchen, I follow  
the same recipe, yet they're not quite the same.  
my mother, the keeper of the board.

For years the kitchen was a place for late  
night talks with mom over a bowl of  
cereal before bed. Then we stopped.  
I don't know why.  
Rarely now, but often enough, I find myself  
alone, in the kitchen, having a bowl of cereal.

I wonder, does she ever do the same,  
all these years later,  
alone, in her kitchen?

I clean as I go in my kitchen. When four  
steps by two take you the full perimeter,  
it's a necessity.

It's calming to go from the mess  
to the organized clean.

I wash the dishes, sponge fully lathered,  
rinsing with steaming water so  
hot it burns my fingertips. I was never the  
washer in my mother's kitchen. Older  
sisters go the jobs of washing and putting away.  
Today I leave my dishes in the  
drainer to dry.

I show my son how to make one of my  
childhood favorites, Filled Noodles.  
Basic pasta dough from scratch,  
rolled and cut into squares that accommodate  
a handful of turkey stuffing. Boiled in salted  
water and served with piping cream of chicken soup.  
He closes his eyes with the first bite,  
quietly says, "a bit of heaven".  
My hear swells.

At age five he watches the  
Frugal Gourmet with me. Father's  
Day is coming and he decides to  
make the Bowtie Pasta dish  
being made. I supervise the cutting  
And the stove, but he  
makes the recipe himself. He smiles  
with pride as he calls Dad to the dinner table.  
This is "his" recipe now and  
a family tradition is born.

Some days, bagels double their size  
on the countertop.

Boiled in sugar water, then baked  
to produce a soft inside, surrounded  
by a crunchy golden crust.

In fall and winter, breads rise in pans  
and fill the house with an intoxicating  
yeast aroma. The best ones resulting  
when I knead out a worry on the dough.

Every few days baked goods of all kinds  
find their way to the countertop. To friends.  
To work. To a neighbors house. I care about you,  
they whisper.

My husband, long accustomed to, but still  
appreciative of meals of marinated balsamic  
filet mignon, herb rice pilaf and crisp  
garden salads. He enjoys just as much,  
a dinner of pancakes or tomato soup.

A selection of  
hundreds of recipes wait, cut and taped  
onto notebook paper and sorted in a  
three ring binder by sections.

Desserts warrant a binder all to themselves.  
Both books wait, nestled between the  
Cookbooks on the shelf.

So, I'm in the kitchen. Again.  
Where to begin?

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