

“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 heart 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?

Amy E. Morgan