

Deirdre Fagan – Two Poems

Realizing I should have never peeled a mango— the skin is delicious

I scrape the bottom with the thin blue spatula,
easing every morsel of tomato from the glass rim
into the sauce pan. The faucet gifts a few tablespoons
to the jar I now shake, catching the scent still clinging.

As I pour the pink-tinged well water into the pan
and gaze out at our sunned forest, I am reminded
of my own childhood. When in my adult life
had I neglected to daily recall the familiar

moves my mother had made when
our own weekly grocery budget
was no more than \$25.00, when her
wage was less than \$3.50 an hour?

I had at least momentarily forgotten want,
forgotten need, as I and my children placed
items into a shopping cart trip after trip,
without care for the total.

As the sauce begins to simmer, I smile at how
my mother prepared me for battle as I responsively
don my warrior armor once more and remind myself
now is another opportunity to teach my daughter gratitude.

The sauce is bubbling when we have an early
taste of dessert before supper—a novel and welcome luxury.
“Take a bite,” I say, and there is delight on her face
as the mango drips down her chin.

Her mouth curls into a smile, the peel at one time
composted, now tingling her tongue.

Night Giblets

After boiling, I dice the giblets thin,
then chop, chop, chop.

The dog waits at my feet for a morsel
of love, as we all once did, before we
could see over countertops.

Childhood is a sliver of light before noon, cutting
through clouds sure to carry us into the evening.

I scissor the sage and slide thyme through my fingers,
recalling footed pajamas and mother sounds.

I've been at the top of the food chain some dozen years now,
but I was a child once, licking gravy from spoon on tipped toes.

Liver, heart, gizzard, neck, whole, extended, longing for more, before
afternoon sliced ever so thinly inward and served me savory, au jus.

Blunt knife slides the giblets across the cutting board and into the heat
where the fatty broth waits for night to come and be welcomed by me.

Deirdre Fagan is a widow, wife, mother of two, and associate professor and coordinator of creative writing in the English, Literature and World Languages Department at Ferris State University. Fagan is the author of the forthcoming memoir, *Find a Place for Me* (Regal House Publishing, 2020), a collection of short stories recently released, *The Grief Eater* (Adelaide Books, 2020), a chapbook of poetry, *Have Love* (Finishing Line Press 2019) and a reference book, *Critical Companion to Robert Frost*, (Facts on File, 2007). Her poem, "Outside In," was a Best of the Net finalist in 2018 and she is the prose editor for *Orange Blossom Review*. Fagan writes poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and academic essays on poetry, memoir, and pedagogy. Meet her at deirdrefagan.com