

Nina Padlof – Three Poems

Sparks

Time-pressed on ink
bring words like matches
spark light—

when cigarettes seemed
fashionable left buds

with lipstick smudges
in glass ashtrays
when you did not mind staying up late
in the heat of summer
on blankets, watched
reruns of quirky
Columbo.

Ali was a tall foreigner with dark wavy hair,
tinted silver strays suggested that
he had lived more than you—

he liked beef stew, cologne,
and walks to the library.
Drank his tea with far too much sugar,
left him jittery.

A chain smoker, his scent
still on the lamp cover,
winter coats—
smells that take you back to

that studio apartment on Centre Avenue
where you shared a twin bed,
Iranian dishes, and how to
ignite those confined words
pressed fingers on typewriters, soon traded
for laptops, cash replaced with swipes and apps.

In the wooden box, one pack of matches.

We are all burning inside

an older woman with plenty of wisdom said,
When I walk, I use my feet
so, with my funky clunky steps
I found a new formula for success

experimented with new tastes
forget fluffy croissants,
or creamy cakes
stir the pot with savory aromas
forget sugar comas

I am now bold
with no extra honey—
I like freshly brewed coffee
robust red wine
lemons and limes
spicy hot peppers
melted cheese over
fresh broccoli

no more overrated bread
or saturated fat
the lean mean version
is where I am at
I may no longer reply to
negativity which gets gritty
in my teeth

forget sweet and sour
mixed with convoluted lies
I'm learning to love my muscular
mighty thighs.

Did you forget

what makes a home a haven?
Is the color of love still passion pink?
Did it suddenly become blood red-orange?

Does it sizzle on the skillet?
Does it burn in tea-light candles?

When did you decide to allow his hands
to thrash you against walls.

Love settled into ecru broken shells
splattered into a battered cake mix.

She serves after-dinner liquors
wears a tailored designer dress
with a tied apron, which hides rage.

Nicely trimmed azalea bushes welcome guests,
while two daughters
wonder if it is safe to walk
down the hallway
and peek at the pretty table

lined with pink linen napkins,
crystal glasses,
fancy sterling silverware,
and for now, no signs of danger.

Nina Padolf, EdD: Recently published chapbook, *Uprooted*, (Kelsay Books, 2021) is available on Amazon. Her poetry is featured in: *Bystander*, *Fort Lewis*, *Washington: Show Us Your Papers An Anthology* (Editors: Buccilli, Scott-Paff, Pollard, Main Street Rag Publishing Co, October 2020), *Solo*, *Lucent Dreaming UK*, (November 2020) *Now More Than Ever-Poems about Pandemic Hunger: Poetryxhunger.com*, (April 2020) *We Must Provide Food Without Questions*. Chiron's Review (*St. John Kansas, Summer, 2019*): *Artificial Orchids*, and many more. She completed her MFA in Creative Writing from Carlow University, a Doctorate in Education, from Argosy University and is an advocate for lifelong learning. She resides in Pittsburgh, PA where she instructs English courses at Duquesne University.