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Chili Saturdays

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Sunny-Side Up

Jessica Gonsoulin

Emma goes into a mall restaurant for her usual breakfast.
It is so late that she could order lunch. Near the door is a sign:
Please wait to be seated.

No one comes. Emma sits at a table by a window with a view of the parking lot.

“Hey!” Marguerite, a waitress, exclaims. “You shouldn’t sit there.

Let me put you at another table.”

Emma moves to the spot Marguerite suggests.

Marguerite lifts her pen to her pad. “What will you have?”

“Let me see a menu.”

“Why do you want to see a menu? You always order the same thing.”

Emma snatches a salt shaker, stands, and sprinkles Marguerite.

Marguerite flicks a napkin at Emma and disappears into the kitchen,
the door swinging back and forth behind her.

“I’ll have my usual, then,” Emma shouts after her.

Marguerite never comes back. Neither does Emma.

Eggs sunny-side up
aromatic black coffee
undercooked bacon

Chili Saturdays

M.J. Dolan

I’d know at breakfast on a late October Saturday
when a light frost glazed
the piles of leaves on the lawn.
Mom took hamburger from the freezer,
then, like a miser counting gold, she stacked
bags of beans on the counter.

I was never in the kitchen when the alchemy occurred—
my mother’s wizardry with hamburger and beans
onions, canned tomatoes and spices.

Ladling directly from the pot,
Dad would fill the bowls and ask:
“Do you want more beans than meat or
more meat than beans?” We’d groan,
my brothers, sisters and I at his old joke.

Then in the 5:30 darkness
that seemed to come too early,
my family gathered around the table,
said grace and ate chili.

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