

My Mother's Mirror ¹

LOIS SIEMENS²

Behind a muted paisley curtain in her dark cellar
geometric strong wood planks hold rows of canned promises
rounded softness of golden ripe peaches, plump cherries reach Heaven-ward
red tomato juice strained (no sign of seeds), half-size jam jars gelling sweet
combinations of gooseberry strawberry apricot plum.

One shelf dedicated to pickles, imprisoned
olive green fingers wear dill rings, accepting vinegar
into soft flesh swollen until crunchy. Served
at almost every *faspa*, my father's favorite
pink pickled watermelon alongside.

Aluminum slightly rusted washtub sits pregnant
with unshelled green peas. The family circles
one bowl on each lap, snap end, stained tired thumb push
round pebbles to dance into bowl settle
down. Laughter holds us inside our work.

My mother's aged face reflects from pressure sealed
glass jars. Endless love served to cavernous mouths.
We chew. Words and prayers tightly packed
among bean and beet. We swallow.
We eat my mother's mirror.

¹ Reprinted with permission from *Pearls 19 Spring 2000 Creative Writing by Douglas College Students* (Douglas College, 2000), 122.

² *Lois Siemens grew up on the Manitoba prairie where the colors in the ditches inspired her to observe the infinite variety of life. She is presently pastoring half-time at Superb Menonite Church in rural Saskatchewan, and can be found on her quiet days roaming the countryside looking for photo opportunities.*