My Mother's Mirror

LOIS SIEMENS

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 fasp, 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.

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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 Mennonite Church in rural Saskatchewan, and can be found on her quiet days roaming the countryside looking for photo opportunities.