

The Word Sick Chef

By Shelley Haggard

I say I'm sick of dining on my own words
but upon reflection this can't be right.
None of the words I'm looking over
on these recipe pages are really mine.
They were made by the mouths and minds
of humans from long ago and though there
are plenty of them; sometimes I just can't find
the ones that will decode my rumbling stomach thoughts.
Still I use many of them freely, not paying rent
or acknowledging copyright and borrowing
meanings liberally. They are more than
a tool; they are my drink, my food,
and I want to feast on them at the long
banquet table that squats in the middle of me.
I want to rub elbows with the other diners
sharing this arena; beating them to the punch line,
jostling them out of the way
when I see a word formulation
that has hence-forth been denied to me.
And when I have engorged my gullet,
I would step off to the farthest corner
where I could begin the process that will ferment
phrases into my yet wordless poems.
There I would spice them, mix them with my yeasty dreams
and let them rise into little loaves of truth.
I would serve them with a deep-thought stew;
feeding the hungry ears and eyes of my pretend audience,
burping up the occasional profound sentence and giving the
poor word-starved souls something near divine to chew on.
I would pair it with a fine bouquet of red-word-wine
and finish the meal with a subtly layered cake of humour
and an iced-word dessert wine.
And like any happy chef I would have
my audience leave the table sated, taking a doggy-bag
of witticisms with them for a midnight snack;
all nodding in agreement that it would be the kind of meal
that brings you back.