

Kitchen Cupboards

By Kasey Storey

A caramel colored warmth fills my kitchen at the end of every day. The sink windows let in the color of the dwindling light so it can bounce off the maple colored cabinets; the cue for the family to begin filling the stools and chairs that are scattered around the counters. The clink of glasses on the granite toast the sun's departure and my mother begins to delve into her cupboards.

My mother's cupboards are a thing of beauty, perpetually filled with any ingredient, snack, candy, or canned good a person could want. She navigates this sea of provisions with ease; where I aimlessly gaze, she assertively finds, pulling out bottles, boxes, and bags. I like to wander around the deep green granite island, pulling out the cabinet drawers that surround it and staring into the assortment of wheat crackers, canned artichoke hearts, and bottles of barbeque sauce, wondering what concoction my mother will craft next.

Some people paint masterpieces, my mother cooks them. She pushes, prods, and pulls to locate her desired ingredient, transforming a forgotten bottle of sesame oil into a tantalizing aroma as it simmers to a sauce. For me, the kitchen drawers open with hesitation, coaxed out of the cupboard doors by only the most forceful of pulls and always stopping with an abrupt tinkle of colliding jars. But for her, they glide forward, offering her their wares, as if yearning to play a role in her next edible production. Watching her work is mesmerizing; a well orchestrated dance around the stove, into the fridge, and out of the pantries, stopping only to take a sip from her small glass of scotch. She dices, divides, drizzles, and dusts: folds, fries, fillets, and flambés: steams, steeps, stirs, and sterilizes: moving through the glossary of cooking terminology with nimble grace. She conducts the kitchen during dinnertime, waving her chopping knife in the

direction of where she wants a place set or a glass filled. The smells and steam from her pots and pans fly around her as she moves from place to place, and hungry eyes follow her progress desperate for a taste of the flavor that floats in the air.

When the simmering begins to quiet and the cupboard doors all close, the sound of ceramic plates and bowls meeting granite echo through the kitchen. She calls the room to attention, inviting everyone who has been lingering around the island to serve up. The family fumbles with her spatulas and salad tongs, spooning the food onto our awaiting dish. My mother always waits to serve herself last, waiting until everyone has begun to move toward the dining room table. She dims the bright lights in the kitchen, like a curtain slowly closing. Her show is over and the second helpings are her applause.