Jackie Biederman
Create

I cook because my poems don't satisfy.

I chop, chop, chop at the cutting board
of metaphors till the meaning is minced,
the concepts pressed.

A frying pan is my notebook,
where the perfect words
and seasonings sauté and simmer under
the structure of oil.

The heavy pot boils over
with associations and references
that complement bursting, scalding
similes.

Then the cooking timer screams-
reminding me that it's time to stir in
a few unexpected ingredients
the many half-stanzas,
occasionally at first then frequently, constantly
till the poetic combination is thick and creamy like risotto.

One last chance to sprinkle in
an inner rhyme scheme, alliteration,
at least some pepper to taste
the powerful punch of the last line,
lingering
on your tastebuds.

Dinner is served on a tablecloth of alternating
indented lines that drape
over the sides.

And after waiting,

waiting

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for a reaction
to my slaving in the kitchen corners of meaning,
my audience only asks for explanations.
"What is this?" dripping from their chins.

Guest Room

I sit here alone on this double bed
with twin sheets.
Tired heavy legs hanging down,
almost brushing the tops of tightly packed
friendly floor tiles.

Lips clenched,
I'm transfixed on the white walls,
paper peeling at the edges,
pathetically reaching for the ceiling.

Matching picture frames stare at me
from opposite sides of the room
and I cross my legs and open my mouth as if to speak to them.
I swear I've seen that little boy and that sailboat before.

A small brown bookcase in the corner
holds the titles you never particularly care for:
New York Times Best Sellers you never read,
generic last minute Christmas gifts, Chicken Soup for the
Traveler's Soul, Trivia and of course-
an oversized atlas.

Coupled suitcases sharing
the same pattern for years,
fall open
unapologetically
on top of each other,
leaving me once again
with that false impression
of home.