

MEATBALLS

My daughter, Kristin, text-messaged the family
a snapshot of a large mixing bowl
containing a generous lump
of beef, pork and veal
some minced fresh green parsley
grated parmesan, breadcrumbs
and two raw eggs
their bright yellow yolks still intact

It is a vibrant still life
holding the promise
of good eating tonight

After clicking “send”
she removes her rings
and begins mixing the ingredients
with her hands—
She rolls handfuls in her palms
shaping them into plump, round balls
then plunges them, raw
into the big pot of thick red gold
bubbling on the stove

She isn’t just making dinner—
she’s making love

as generations before have done
and as she will teach Emelia
in a few years

Kristin grew up watching me
perform this very same ritual
as I had watched my mother

My daughter has giggled over the years
at the good natured boasting and teasing
between my sister, Carol, and me
about whose meatballs are the best
We call our squabbles, “Meatball Wars”

There is a framed picture
hanging in a prominent place
in my kitchen, of my sister
obviously enjoying one of my meatballs

dripping with homemade tomato sauce

Our brother, Frank, has been known
to come to my home for dinner
and go on and on about how
my meatballs are indisputably the best

and, when he's at Carol's house
he positively raves about hers

Pasta nights in our family
are the great gastronomic events
of our lives

Maude Carolan Pych