

Table for One

By: Donna Ison

I make a meal
Of my heart.

For an amuse-bouche,
I slice off a sliver
And leave it raw,
Seasoned only by
The salt of a single tear,
And delivered to my lips
With a silver filigree fork.

As the main course,
I carve a large chunk,
Soak it in buttermilk,
Dredge it in cornmeal,
And deep-fry it
In a cast-iron skillet.
An homage
To my holler heritage.

Dessert consists
Of a dainty morsel
Sprinkled with sugar crystals.
I eat it with my fingers.
I savor the sweetness,
And wait for the bitter
That is bound to follow.

I leave a last portion
To be dried in the sun
To prevent spoilage.
I will keep it with me,
For a day when I am lean,
And lonely,
And need the kind of sustenance
That only your own heart
Can give.