

Sample Found Poem

Prose Selections from Chang-rae Lee's "Coming Home, Again"

From that day, my mother prepared a certain meal to welcome me home. It was always the same. Even as I rode the school's shuttle bus from Exeter to Logan airport, I could already see the exact arrangement of my mother's table.

I knew that we would eat in the kitchen, the table brimming with plates. There was the *kalbi*, of course, broiled or grilled depending on the season. Leaf lettuce, to wrap the meat with. Bowls of garlicky clam broth with miso and tofu and fresh spinach. Shavings of cod dusted in flour and then dipped in egg wash and fried. Glass noodles with onions and shiitake. Scallion-and-hot-pepper pancakes. Chilled steamed shrimp. Seasoned salads of bean sprouts, spinach, and white radish. Crispy squares of seaweed. Steamed rice with barley and red beans. Homemade kimchi. It was all there—the old flavors I knew, the beautiful salt, the sweet, the excellent taste. (p. 5)

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I wish I had paid more attention. After her death, when my father and I were the only ones left in the house, drifting through the rooms like ghosts, I sometimes tried to make that meal for him. Though it was too much for two, I made each dish anyway, taking as much care as I could. But nothing turned out quite right—not the color, not the smell. At the table, neither of us said much of anything. And we had to eat the food for days. (p. 6)

You can find the full essay at http://readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson998/ComingHomeAgain.pdf

Found Poem Based on the Prose Selection

My mother prepared
A certain meal
To welcome me home.
We would eat in the kitchen
Table brimming
Kalbi, leaf lettuce to wrap the meat
Garlicky clam broth with miso and tofu and fresh spinach
Shavings of cod
Scallion and pepper pancakes
Chilled steamed shrimp
Steamed rice.
The old flavors I knew
Beautiful, salt, sweet, excellent.
I wish I had paid more attention.