

Salt and That Time Blues

Six months I've cooked, and
he's said he loves almost all, Tonight,
I've added bacon to the soup we've been
eating three days. He hated the sausages,
chucking them back in the pot. I thought
soup was the best way to go, stretching
what we barely have these lost months,
the large and many bills and fines,
fees and debts. Except for two meals
at the mall, I've had this anxious soup
three times a day since it was made,
afraid he would be displeased. Once
a day the soup has been his fare; he'll have
no more than that. And tonight I burned
my fingers, turning bacon, oil pouring over
skin via hollow tongs. I had cut fat from the
bacon with scissors, making amusing shapes for
a Sunday spent alone. And the soup was
hot despite drabness. But now he tells me
no more salt in cooking, just in my own bowl.
He hates salt, he says, while I ponder chips
and packaged soups, take-out snacks to die for.
I am his controllable variable; he'll turn my
music down. Salt everywhere but
from my hand. It's another night watching
cracks appear in these rooms, hoping
for no more spiders or six-inch slugs
on the walls. I find them, their trails,
inevitably. The night is computer solitaire
as I listen for the stray orange tigercat
sometimes at my door.

KARA-MIKAL BURROWES