



5-1-2019

Magic Spoon

Alison Ritchie
University of the Pacific

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/calliope>



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ritchie, Alison (2019) "Magic Spoon," *Calliope*: Vol. 50 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/calliope/vol50/iss1/7>

This Poem is brought to you for free and open access by the College of the Pacific Journals at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Calliope by an authorized editor of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact mgibney@pacific.edu.

Magic Spoon

Alison Ritchie

This wood runs deep.

“Mangia!”

Burnt on one edge, the half-crescent
of a crone’s moon.
It knows how to do everything
and everything always begins with an onion.

Clockwise or widdershins
or banged on the side of the pot,
the strict warning of the half-spiral —
if you rest, you will burn —
the gentle fold, precise as a dancer’s fan,
watch, be patient —
all these sigils burned into the thin
soft wand of my grandmother’s spoon.

Hold its weightlessness and remember
her thin blue fingers impervious to heat.
She could reach into hell or into the sun
and bring out something beautiful.
Her face impervious, wise, focused,
crossed brows, lips pointed, teeth shining:

“Watch!”

Stand on my tiptoes and peer into this cauldron.
Our history: garlic, tiny fishbones, smuggled oil,
13 laughing children with grape-blue feet,
snails and dandelion salad,
humor like vinegar,
anger like these sweet hot chilis that have no name,
love, red and heavy on an August vine,

salt cast on snowy cobblestones,
these spices rolled off of ships,
the clump of oregano grows in the backyard,
strength of weeds, we'll never get that out,
a receipt in every grain
of this spoon stained to patina (a patina, not a stain).

A recipe is spoken in the bright air,
a spell simmers for a minute.
Measure nothing, write nothing —
Just remember this part
 is magic.

Her eyes as kind as a deer's eyes —
Warm amber, my safe heart,
standing in a meadow, dappled with sunlight.

She holds her spoon aloft and swirls the steam in her kitchen
and says,

“It is as I say it is,”

and with this we make it so.