

Ode to a Ravioli

By Mike Sispera

Flour, water, egg, cheese;
Simple ingredients,
But nothing short of Heaven
When mixed just right.

The real recipe?
Commitment, tradition, love;
That's what it takes to make a ravioli –
At least the one's we make.

10:00 a.m., Grandma's house,
Starting time,
Get the dough rolling!
Well, 11 O'clock for me,
1:00 O'clock for Aunt Jeannine,
2:30 for Dad,
"Who wants a sandwich?"

Grandma is a maestro
Orchestrating her loyal symphony
Keeping beat,
On her feet,
Critical movement,
Crescendo!
"We need more!"
700, 800, 900 never enough.

Flinging flour,
Cranking the dough,
Filling and folding,
The secrets we know!
(3 words...ricotta, ricotta, ricotta).

Laughing and rolling
Onward we toil
Grandma's house is alive
As our efforts boil.

Curious to know
The sweet taste of success
Take it from a pro who knew
You have to butter up Grandma
And hide from the crew.

Shoulder-to-shoulder
Over the rolling boil we stand.
Looking at Grandma,
I eagerly watch her
As she delicately ladels,
Carefully places,
Lovingly arranges,
My treat,
Her pride,
Our joy,
The ravioli - on the plate
My plate!

Next to the billowing pastries
A bubbling Italian brew
Tomato sauce transformed,
Old world style,
Grandma's heritage passed,
I smile!

Sweet tomato tanginess
Invades my nose
Filling it with vine-ripened vapors
Rising from our creation.
I lift a succulent sample to my lips,
And slurp!

Grandma, an aficionado, and I her apprentice
Both eager for a report.
Me for the taste,
And she for my retort.
"They're so delicious aren't they?!"
She would rhetorically ask.
"Yes Grandma, these are the best raviolis I've ever tasted!"

Oblivious,
As the tender noodle pastry and tomato concoction
melts away.
In this moment of seasonal bliss,
I bask.

By days end the task is done.
The board is scraped,
Cutters cleaned,
Stories shared,
Life lessons gleaned.

Our product is sorted and packaged,
Each counted with care
Everyone knowing the purpose they bear.

A ravioli –
Our raviolis,
Are more than just standard holiday fare,
In each one of these gifts
Is reflected Grandma's care.
And during that special time of year,
Whether friend or kin,
The ravioli is served
With great love from within.

So as you can see
The great complexity,
Of simple things
That go into making a ravioli.

Grandma's legacy,
And my memories of her
Will forever linger,
Every time I pick out the dough
from between each finger.