

Why We Really Work in Food

the apron tied around her waist
surrounds her like a frock
of mustard and ketchup
and ranch dressing—the white trash fav.
oh how tasteful.
the shoes—sold at a most refined discount shop
on highway 41—
smell like old bacon and sausage—
eau de pork, saks, one would assume.

the tag on his grand, off-white, not quite Tide-clean lapel
reads manager—proudly—boldfaced—MANAGER.
a vinyl belt, tags still hidden, untorn, beneath the simulated
gold buckle,
hitches up the shit-brown, polyester stylers covering
the legs that never see sun.

“over easy?” she cries, less than hopeful that little johnny will
reply,
at the family of 12 at table 11.
“duh” they seem to sing together, like a church choir—
but they’d actually tip less if it were sunday—
jesus gives more than 10%
spells her favorite button.
“over easy? eggs over easy?”
repetition is the only chloroform she carries
in her lint and small change-laden pockets.
someone recalls english and returns from helen keller land—
revived by hunger.

“thank you” he says pseudo-sincerely to an elderly couple
with hashbrowns streaked across their golf polos
as he rings tickets and collects strawberry-preserved
dollars.

“come again” he says—and glances at her.

she pivots and grins coyly.
he chuckles and meets her sweaty gaze
winking across the orange and green striped carpet at her
as she carries a tray full of syrupy, slobbered-on dishes.
she notices her lipstick on his collar
as he turns to follow her into the kitchen
to see what’s cookin’
out back
behind the dumpster.

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