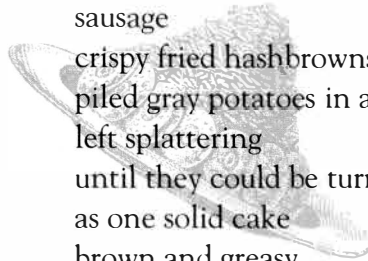
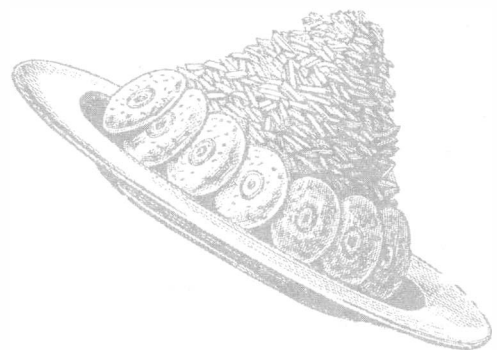


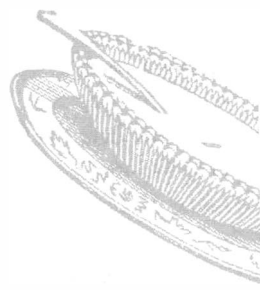
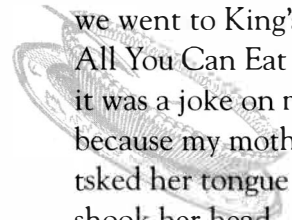
As I got older
I was encouraged less and less
to eat
luscious breakfasts were served
to my young brothers
waffles with syrup sent from my grandfather
in New Hampshire
one jug lasted through my teenage years
I hated breakfast food
except bacon
sausage
crispy fried hashbrowns:
piled gray potatoes in a crusty cast-iron skillet
left splattering
until they could be turned
as one solid cake
brown and greasy



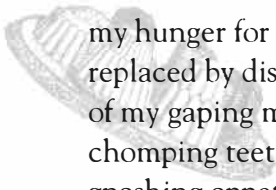
She looked at me
at my stomach
and mouth
disgusted




Once a week
we went to King's Table
All You Can Eat
it was a joke on me
because my mother watched my plate
tsked her tongue
shook her head
and offered me diet mints
to offset the soft ice-cream sundaes
eaten by my brothers



my hunger for her
replaced by disapproval
of my gaping mouth
chomping teeth
gnashing appetite



Now when I see her
I am very careful to always leave
some food on the plate



Raquel

