

My Anonymous Career

by Gita M. Smith

In the third year of our marriage, which coincidentally was my third year of trying to finish a novel, Rainy said to me, "Get out there and be a breadwinner, you big galoot."

I signed on with a large national restaurant chain to write descriptors for menus, and I was the very first to use the term "farm-fresh" to refer to eggs and "kettle-simmered" to describe soup.

Menu writers toil in anonymity, but my reward came when the National Restaurant Industry awarded me the Golden Napkin Holder for coining the adjective "*artisanal*" to describe, well, pretty much anything overpriced, from bread to beer to pizza.

Although you'll never see my name on a menu, I can guarantee you've eaten in one of this chain's many outlets and I will bet my descriptors added to your interest in sizzling, creamy, buttery, garden-fresh, succulent, melting, old-timey, home-made goodness and artisanal flavor-bursting dishes.

One day, to supplement my income, I answered an ad in the paper calling for writers to contribute heartwarming sentiments and pithy sayings to a collection that would be called "Chicken Soup for the Soul," and we would be paid by the word but get no author's credit. The book was a huge hit and spawned all kinds of sequels, such as "Chicken Soup for the Golfer's Soul," to which I (rather proudly but anonymously) contributed, "In life, you've got to bogey before you can birdie."

