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Poem

The old psychiatrist at table

Richard E. Kravitz 

Each patient, I realise now,
I treated as if a precious piece of crockery,
devoted to their care, so mindful
that they not be chipped or broken,
or, if already cracked and damaged,
to repair them as I could,
to discover to what set they might belong,
their rightful place and function,
to nest them at table
within the company of cutlery and linen,
the gleam of a crystal service.

But now I know, all this time,
they were sitting right across from me
at the same table, each with our own
settings, sometimes matched,
sometimes not, paying less or no attention
to formalities of service, enjoying
shared tastings, savouring each meal
we had prepared without planning,
whipped up for just the occasion,
eating together, quaffing a bold red,
sipping coffee, chewing it over,
the lines, the words and sighs,
coming improvised to our lips,
hungry, but patient, for what we made.

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