



## Per Os (by mouth)

The fork trembles as if moved by some unseen force  
 oscillating with increasing intensity  
 as portions of pancake and fried egg fly off into space,  
 missing their intended destination.

Eyes opened wide with frustration  
 show the distress of lost skills acquired long ago,  
 now relegating their owner to sitting in anticipation.

Bending to this need I pick up a spoon  
 perhaps the more useful implement in directing transit of the desired pabulum  
 and begin.

Reminded of feeding my own offspring in decades past  
 a familiar process of scooping and aiming to the target,  
 their response triggering my hand to repeat this cycle again and again.

Lips open and tongue extends like an eager nestling  
 to receive sustenance  
 with gratitude, with necessity  
 and the expectation of completing our task together.

This we must all engage in with intention and regularity  
 cloaking animal need in the finery of linen and silver  
 separating us from this primal instinct of snarling gnashing teeth  
 with only a thin veneer.

There is humanity in feeding one another  
 the gift returned to the elder  
 from those to whom he has provided the same  
 without the thought that he might return  
 to this place once again.

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 Illustration by Erica Aitken.