

## Musical soup

Spring just a week away, but this raw  
rainy day cries out for a pot  
of African peanut chicken soup  
to warm us through winter's last gasp.  
I turn on the classical music station,  
gather the ingredients and spend  
the afternoon in a symphony

of chopping, grinding, stirring  
to Beethoven, Elgar, Brahms,  
and I'm back in my mother's kitchen,  
always full of musical accompaniment  
to the clanging pots, running water,  
simmering soups and sauces.  
Sometimes she hummed along,  
so happy to be rolling dough  
for strudel, filling the cookie jar,  
stuffing the freezer—always with  
her hair just so, her lipstick on.

A woman of her generation,  
she gloried in her dust-free house  
with everything always in its place,  
the savory meals her family relished  
every night. Her grandchildren still  
reminisce about her spaghetti sauce,  
her chocolate cake. In her last years,  
from her wheelchair, a repeated  
refrain: *I've had everything  
I ever wanted. I'm a lucky woman.*

And all I ever wanted was not to be  
like her, to do more, be more, make  
a difference, see the world. The adagio  
begins, the violins sing an insistent  
question: *What of me will my children  
remember?* Probably not the photos

I took in India, the cases I won  
in court, the poems I published.  
I stand at my kitchen window  
watching rain, inhale the fragrance  
of browning onions, sway  
to the rhythmic swirl of a wooden  
spoon through thickening soup.

*Joyce Meyers*