



Pickled Pears.
Oil pastel on paper, texted sintra
19.5" x 27.5"
Nov.3, 2006

Pickled Pears

I am five. I'm sitting at the family festive table. Everyone is here, at my Nana and Grandpa's, around the shining mahogany table. All the glass and candles and silver are glittering and lovely. I slip off my shoes and dig my toes into the carpet under the chair.

I am wearing a new dress. The skirt puffs out at the waist in a delightful way and when I sit in the dining room chair it poofs up around me. But the crinoline underneath is scratchy and sticking into my waist uncomfortably. I try to ignore that and concentrate on the cut crystal dish in front of me with the pickled pears in it.

Grandpa is giving a speech.

The pickled pears are in front of me because I have chosen specifically to sit in front of them. Though called 'pickled', they are in fact spiced and sugary. They've had their skins peeled off but they still have the stem so you can hold on to them. They are especially small pears — half the size of a regular pear. They are so yummy that all the kids vie for them. Always they are in the faceted crystal dish with the jig jag upper edges.

They were always there on Nana's and Grandpa's party table, appearing like magic from the pantry. We never got the recipe and now I need it. Times have moved on and now I am fifty. I'm searching out the recipe to create those spiced pears, but somehow they aren't quite right. The missing ingredient is the hand of Nana stirring the pot.