

ANN WEIL

Instructions for Carving by the Coroner Poet

The breeding of man
Dexterous and graceful
Plain joints and cold things
The bitter back
The jelly parts about the head
This deep trench
Forty mortal gashes
Stuffed in the flap
Through the pope's eye
Into the hollow
The sanguinary spectacle
Going round it with the knife
Tongue cannot be too delicately cut

ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

Ann Weil created “Instructions for Carving by the Coroner Poet” from *The Cook and Housewife’s Manual* by Margaret Dods (1826). About the poem and the process of composing it, Ann writes:

For this poem I focused on several paragraphs from the chapter entitled “Instructions for Carving.” I perused the text, making a list of words and phrases that stood out to me as linguistically interesting and rich in imagery. From this list of 63 phrases, I noticed a theme within a theme begin to develop. I continued to erase until I reached the final 14 lines, keeping them in the order they appeared in the original text. The end result is an erasure poem, although my process is less erasure and more “gathering.” I find that this approach allows me to work with lengthy texts without becoming overwhelmed. I liken it to walking through a field of flowers and gathering just the more extraordinary blossoms to take with me into the world.

Ann Weil’s work has appeared in *Halfway Down the Stairs*, *Clementine Unbound*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *What Next?*, and *The Voices Project*. She lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and can be found online at annweilpoetry.com.

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