

Three Poems

Caius Buran

Runner-up, Gladys Boen Scholarship

Body

Take sacrament
—holy cannibalism—
submit to being
enveloped in
the gash.

Of Adam's side, Eve was born.
Between her lips beget
the fruit.

Salvabitur autem per filiorum generationem.

Sup of milk
—blood refined—
let His meatflesh melt
and anoint
awaiting anchorholds.

Tennos

At the finish line, you brush me away.
Turn. I'll mentally trace your vertebrae.

To hold a heart is but a simple task
Though, what thrums in me: (damn that wretched meat!)
A grisly mass all torn and maimed and patched,
You are right to fear its buh-beat, buh-beat.
A written auscultation, so to speak:
"Just fluttering pulse?" Listen closely . . .
"Scarified terror! Ventricular freak!"
"The chambers thrashing disconcertingly!"
Perhaps that is why it is found mostly
Mothworn, hidden in hermetic closets;
Ichorous ulcer, hewn erosely;
And upon kebabs skewered by prophets.

Wasabi

I see reflections of myself in odd
places: prying open a rectangle of cheap SNOWFOX sushi
and diving in using two mismatched chopsticks
from my utensil drawer. I learned how to wield them with the guidance of
a *Kung Fu Panda* DVD's special features
and my uncle.

Resting between thin strips of wet, pickled ginger and
the soy sauce packet is what I'm meant to assume
is wasabi. Most people eat around it. Years ago, my aunt took her
napkin and scraped the offending paste off her roll,
her nose upturned, "*It tastes so cheap.*"
Years ago, a lover cradled his ginger
in his palms, and cleansed it of the reviled spice
beneath Grand Forks tap water.

The gray-green glob—
splattered in a sink, squished in an avoided corner, or spat out in horror—
is just ground horseradish
with food-safe dye and cornstarch. Some manufacturers
add a dash of mustard too. This "wasabi" lasts longer
on store shelves and is less expensive to produce en-masse. It
also burns more.

I grew up eating horseradish on everything:
pâine, crenvurșt,
kofta kebab,
fried okra,
sushi. My face always pinches at the sting. I picture myself
smoldering.

Caius Buran is a McNair scholar pursuing a bachelor of arts in English with certificates in creative writing and classical studies at the University of North Dakota. He is one of the assistant managing editors for *Floodwall*, the treasurer of UND's chapter for Sigma Tau Delta, and the president of the Adelphi Literary Society. His free time is spent starring on, and creating for, *9mm Retirement Radio*, an actual-play podcast, and doting on his dog, two cats, and ball python.