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Salami

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SALAMI

Stomach of goat, crushed sheep balls, soft full pearls of pig eyes, snout gristle, fresh earth, worn iron of trotter, slate of Zaragoza, dried cat heart, cock claws. She grinds them with one hand and with the other fists mountain thyme, basil, paprika, and knobs of garlic.
And if a tooth of stink thistle pulls blood from the round blue marbled hand all the better for this ruby of Pamplona, this bright jewel of Vich, this stained crown of Solsona, this salami.

The daughter of mismatched eyes, 36 year old infant smelling of milk. Mama, she cries, mama, but mama is gone, and the old stone cutter must wipe the drool from her jumper. His puffed fingers unbutton and point her to toilet. Ten, twelve hours a day, as long as the winter sun holds up he rebuilds the unvisited church of San Martin. Cheep cheep of the hammer high above the town, sparrow cries lost in the wind or lost in the mind. At dusk he leans to the coal dull wooden Virgin and asks for blessings on

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the slow one and peace
on his grizzled head, asks
finally and each night
for the forbidden, for
the knowledge of every
mysterious stone, and
the words go out on
the overwhelming incense
of salami.

A single crow
passed high over the house,
I wakened out of nightmare.
The winds had changed,
the Tramontana was tearing
out of the Holy Mountains
to meet the sea winds
in my yard, burning and
scaring the young pines.
The single poplar wailed
in terror. With salt,
with guilt, with the need
to die, the vestments
of my life flared, I
was on fire, a stranger
staggering through my house
butting walls and falling
over furniture looking
for a way out. In the last room
where moonlight slanted
through a broken shutter
I found my smallest son
asleep or dead, floating
on a bed of colorless light.
When I leaned closer
I could smell the small breaths
going and coming, and each
bore its prayer for me,
the true and earthy prayer
of salami.