

## Butchered Love

I dated a butcher one week.

We met at a Saturday night dance, his shower-scrubbed skin and cedar-stored sweater luring me into hours of slow dances, slower kisses. His promises of tender steaks and plump poultry seduced me even more. I ran my fingers through his long, curly hair and fell into his chocolate brown eyes. The brandy made my blood flow hot. The rhythm of the drums matched my pounding heart.

On Sunday we went for a drive. Windows open, autumn breezes blowing through the car, bringing the tangy odor of rotting leaves with a warning that frigid days would soon be here. We shared a jug of wine – and more. Last night's cigarettes lingered on his tongue. His sweater no longer smelled of cedar and felt scratchy on my cheek. The wine was dry and bitter.

Monday night he appeared on my doorstep holding a beef shoulder wrapped in butcher paper. Red splatters dotted his white tunic and the tops of his shoes. We cooked it on the grill – wood smoke stinging our eyes. His hair was slicked back under a grey cotton cap. His beard was prickly and painful.

On Tuesday he came carrying a fat hen, yellow spots joining the red ones on his tunic. As he cooked, the oil on his face matched the golden chicken skin. He wanted to make love that night, implying that I owed him for the gifts of food. I put him off with promises of future love.

There was no butcher nor any meat at my door on Wednesday night, but on Thursday he was back again with a loin of pork, the roadmap on the tunic documenting the past four days.

The Friday fish smelled better than he.

For one week I dated a butcher.