

Ortolan

*Oh Ortolan, sweet bird of France,
little field hand
of the yellowhammer family.
Kings, sybarites and rich men
have yearned for your taste,
captured you, caged you, taken out your eyes,
force fed you on millet and drowned you
in a glass of Armagnac.
All for their pleasure,
for your taste sweet ortolan,
they have risked imprisonment.*

*Singing in the hedges of Bordeaux
as the morning rises red and races across
the sky to catch the day,
you have fluttered amongst the flat hedgerows,
aspiring as you arc and soar upwards
to release the joy in your throat to the sun.
God's little bird.*

*Now you are lying
delicately on your backs in your cassoulettes,
legs and wings folded sweetly
in death.*

*Skin in its golden glow
exposed for all to see,
your empty eye sockets
staring blindly upwards.*

*The humans gathered at the feast
have covered their heads with
white napkins
in respect, shame,*

and gastronomic orgy.

*First, they snap off your heads,
put you in their mouths,
consume you whole,
savoring the hot taste of you
on their tongues.*

*Biting into your heart and liver,
crunching your bones
and finally swallowing
you in one bite.*

