

Meat Thermometer

What's up, little girl?

I ain't got time to play

Baby didn't say too much

She said, "Are you gay?"

—Prince, "Uptown"

I've been lied to.

Cheated on, stolen from, pawed at. I've been

A downy baby chick :: an eggshell in a handbasket,

Taken by the jaws of a plump red fox,

Crunched 'til the cock crows.

Here in the mud, shadows fold over our bodies

So that we are pigs in blankets. Delicious, delicious,

Our flesh warped & soft :: a sheet of fat, of gristle.

When dawn comes, we wallow in the crust falling from our eyelids —

The glassy streets are keratinous chains, rows of them.

What was vulnerability has become desperation.

Craving the butcher's knife, how it rewrites the body,

Cuts away excess :: the sexless or the voluptuous,

Packages, labels, sells the meat. Oh, the meat:

Distended eyeballs trashed, rank with their undressing stares.

Dare us to defy convention, & we'll plunge into the murk head-first,

Jaws wrapped tight around our own ham hocks, the flesh still raw,

Webbed with glaring pupils :: dripping with lies.