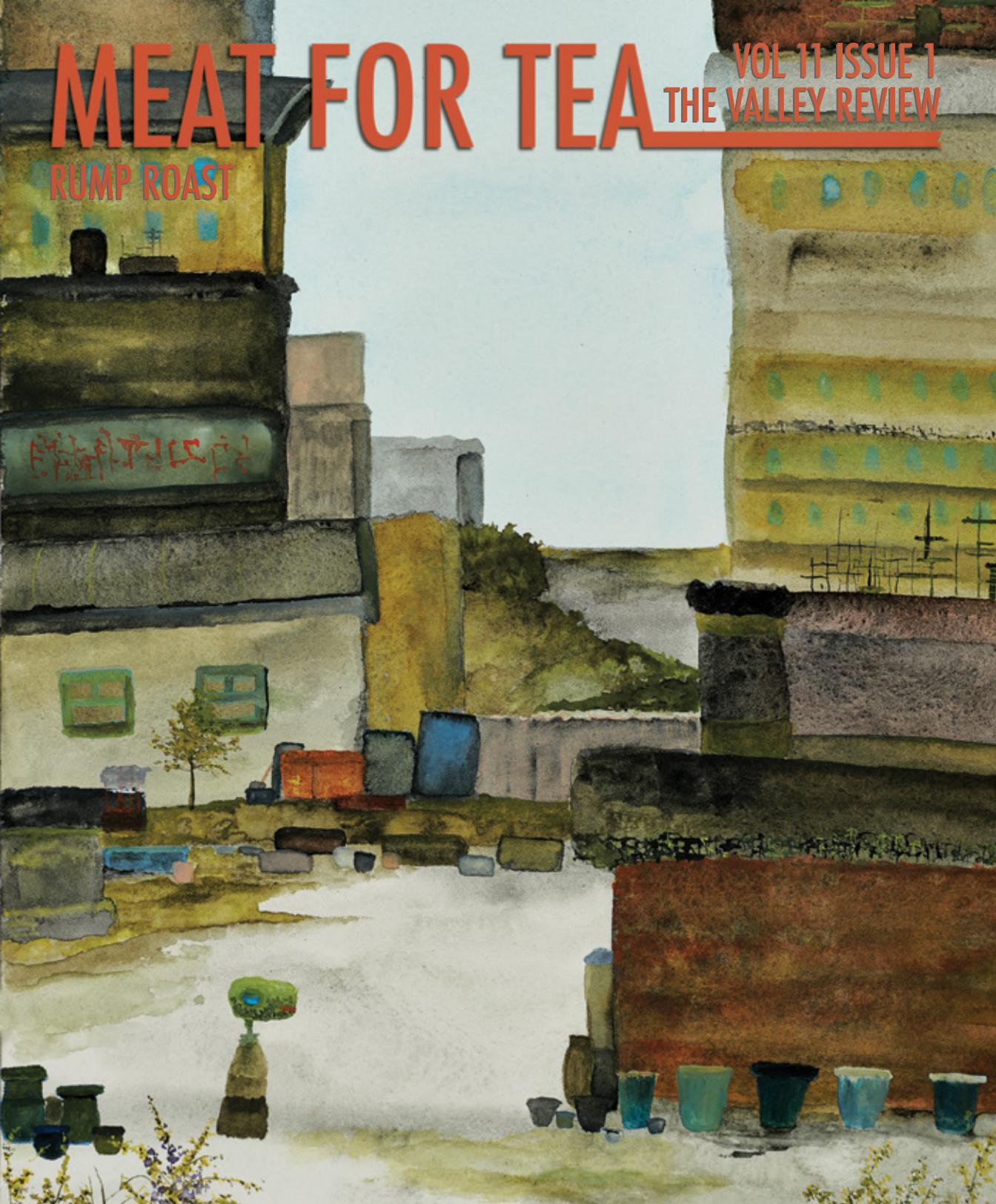


MEAT FOR TEA

VOL 11 ISSUE 1
THE VALLEY REVIEW

RUMP ROAST



Meat for Tea: The Valley Review

Meat for Tea: The Valley Review was founded by Elizabeth MacDuffie and Alexandra Wagman. We are a non-academic affiliated magazine committed to recognizing and featuring the work of the artists, writers, and musicians living in western Massachusetts and beyond.

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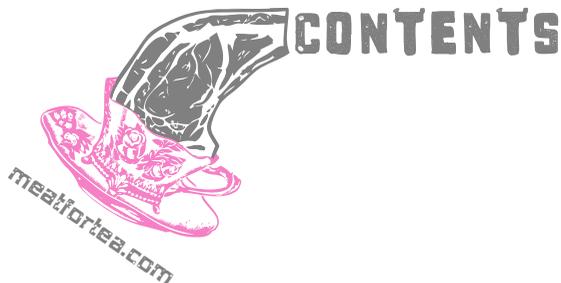
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salutations from the staff

Welcome to the Rump Roast Edition.

Well-exercised hindquarters produce the best beef bottom round. Large amounts of collagen and connective tissue make this cut naturally tough and hard to chew. Rump roast (or silverside as it's called in the UK—those Brits always see the bright side of things, don't they?) comes from the bottom round cut. This is easy to remember as all the best rumps are round. In fact, you might argue that big butts are part of what makes America great.

To produce tender mouthwatering meat, and the only proper American way to cook a (t)rump, slowly roast on a low temperature for an extended period of time. Keeping the heat of marches, protests, and secret Twitter vigilantes steady at around 250 degrees Fahrenheit for roughly thirty minutes per pound.

At about 250 pounds, America's (t)rump requires approximately one hundred and twenty-five hours in the oven to produce a pinkish red medium rare. If, upon slicing into your roast, you discover a disturbing orange color, throw it out immediately—the meat is rotten.

You might be nervous about bacteria growing during this low and slow cooking term. There is an additional step to assuage your concerns. As bacteria grows from the outside, you can eliminate any germs by first searing your roast. This seals in the juices while also making sure nothing evil lurks within your (t)rump. This is especially important as much of the grass-feed beef in America is dangerously imported from countries that support (gasp!) refugees. And, you can never be too careful when allowing destitute women and children across your borders.

Once you've waited out the interminably long cooking period, make sure to let your roast rest in order to allow the wealth of juices to redistribute. (t)rump roast is best served with winter vegetables such as roasted or mashed potatoes. Comfort food to get you through the toughest of times.

Bon Appétit,
Bethany

fat city

Jennifer Juneau

In this corrupt month of smoke and mirror towns
I've purchased a home in the hyper-spoken
section east of Imposterville where one can drown
under false impressions faster than a rainfall of fallen gold.
May I overdose on the eucaine of living
in a mega-wing of my torture castle
and witness what the truly giving
dish and saucer in the arcane kitchens
of hope and prophecy minus one accomplished spin doctor.

I couldn't dream of a life more politic than that
and wouldn't want to bribe any proctor
into solidifying my questionable reputation as fat cat.
On the evening before the pivotal test
I'll sleep well. I'll lick bad history with the best.



[Editor's Note: We apologize for incorrectly printing this in the Silver Needle issue.
Here it is in its entirety.]



9 days past julius eastman's birthday

Jim Whitten

** for Karl Warner*

Treating wounded horses in pyramids' shadow

dronechangedronechangedronechangedronechange

lowercase cursive k's make teardrops and sunflower seeds

before the shells are broken

strings of words

participles

particles

disciples

6

there must be an app that points directly to Mecca

halal food carts in the meatpacking district

oriental carpet prices based on their thread count

by square inch

centimeter

millimeter

kilometer



oh, to be frederick seidel

Jim Whitten

Oh, to be Frederick Seidel
name-dropping luxury brands
a wealthy and discriminating clientele
LVMH in their portfolios

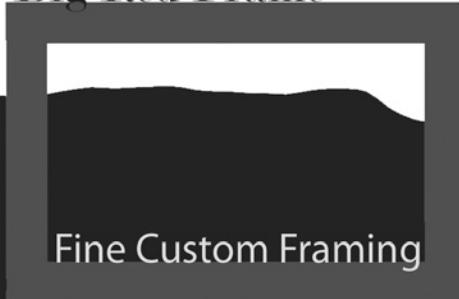
never logged onto Facebook
never had an account
wiped catpoop off his foot
onto the fridge when he had gout

drank like a fish
flapping out of water
the crowds thought he was clapping
so they joined him, acting happy

now he's far away and he won't answer his phone
sitting in his study, smoking, writing poems
he's just about to end and put on his suit
walk outside and feel like a new person



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5 poems from "the american myths"

John Amen

6

The after party's a dress rehearsal,
an off-off-Broadway retread. I skulk
in a dim foyer, scanning for Amanda,
we knew each other in our 53rd St days.
Arthur's already out of body, eyes spin
like red pennies, his alter ego waking

from a corporate dream. Dr. Kilgus
saws the turkey, pink juice squirting
on a yellow tablecloth, a dozen photos
of the dead *familia* propped on the mantel.
Libby sports her necklace of a lost son,
black as an ash pond. She quotes Plato

while flirting with the resident killer.
Lu swills poison on demand. We're all
critics, & the night's a bomb, impatience
trussed in foil, gaffes echoing in sound-
proofed Tupperware. We lift our aerosols,
toast the white God, beast of America.

7

for CN

Woods are for sale, perfect for a parking lot,
owners will throw in antique sculpture of the
mother strapped to a flowery rood, hologram
of navy-blue flames requiring no maintenance.
Locale zoned for political correctness, includes
shrine erected in 2008 in honor of the lost boy,

how he bit the nipple, watched as his white father
tossed Jacksons, huffing the bellows of gossip,
his mother's reddening flesh. Years he'd fan
the pyre, gorge on ash, roll in it, he'd become
the black son, spend his teens & twenties in exile,
rising finally as the hustler of his generation.

Now's his chance to sway public opinion, white
God as his personal Super PAC. The black son
thumbs-up for the camera, toothy on the billboard.
The black son roaring on Super Bowl Sunday.
This is how he storms the world; that's payback,
baby, manifest destiny, that's o bless America.

10

after Bigger

J'll def prevail, he has before, his dead mother
pleading on the rood, the asp in his gut, he begs
his white father for a loan. It's bad on the west side,
parking lots & yards bloated with litter, swinging
nooses, but a home's not all mulch & manicure,
& a white father's a bank with a bottomless mouth.

J can't protect what's untrammelled in the world,
can't feel the divine hanging a sec from his skin,
begins to bargain as the verdict's read. Each gunner
in the firing line's his brother, he crumples with ♥
gushing in his black blood— ♥ the white father,
♥ the dead mother, game money, & still he has a

knack for leaving when he needs himself the most.
That's trifling. True, J sails in circles as often as lines,
but his wins are exotic ports that can't be docked
without him. Hours founder as he drags the straits
of adrenaline & cortisol. Luck's his compass, maybe
his only compass, again he eddies toward open sea.

12

*An electrical insect control system's erected in the
center of the labyrinth. White father gnaws a bone,
dead mother breastfeeds her black doll beneath a
plastic rood. Action. White father & I spew stories,
trying to outdo each other. I riff on my Navy days.
Zap. He opens with his timeless hit, the couple ousted*

from a gated community for picnicking on the grass.
Zap. I unravel my years of addiction, how I poured
& plunged, ate pills by the vial, lived in a rusty cage
with a ghost & a mourning dove, finally coming down
in a Brooklyn intensive care unit. Zap. He ripostes
with his standby re the infamous deluge. *A group of*

homeless men forms. Zap. I close with my tearjerker,
ma & pa waving in the driveway as I fled Topeka.
Zap. The homeless men award me the paper crown.
We piss in unison as the white father grinds his teeth,
retreating into darkness. We crucify the dead mother,
dismember the black doll. *Smoke, mock-waving.* Zap.

15

In white America, every word flies in two directions, we
use Jacksons to split a black son, bury you in the numbers,
& when the white father prods you from his house, as surely
he will, you vanish without looking back, you spend years



on a scaffold—IRAs, 401Ks, insurance, a world of
pyramids & smoke, prescriptions & proscriptions that might

win you admission to a grand gala that fizzled decades ago.
The white father packages his rules, envy lubes this world,
sells you to close the gap, a lure of cash & trophies, instead
stirs another brand of missing. Scripture says: *every white
father must a black son kill.* Conventional wisdom counters:
every black son must a white father bless, revising the books

when it comes to love. A black son strives to keep a home,
pipes rupture, roof & floors collapse. Fixtures spark & death-
rattle, appliances seize, the lawn's a backstabber. It's torture
to study a Beatrice, not that you crave what you see, rather:
you see nothing at all. Give up your keys & swinging doors:
the bed you crash by night, maybe by morning you remain.



geography lesson

Justine Dymond

A siren wailed behind Pina. In the rearview mirror, a police cruiser maneuvered between the cars swarmed at the tollbooth. The cop stopped at one of the concrete barriers between the booths just ahead of Pina, next to a pot of marigolds. Fake nature. Summertime dusk was closing in and moths and other flying insects careened in the brightening flood lights.

She had somehow missed the sign for Exit 57 Monroeville, the one Evan, her very organized boyfriend, had told her to take. She had to exit at the next one, for Oakmont, wherever that was. The map Evan had printed out and highlighted for her was on the old Corolla's passenger seat next to a disheveled pile of his '80s rock CDs and an empty bag of popcorn. Evan had driven her to Hoboken to get her out of the city without mishap and caught the train back to their apartment. In the rush to leave, she had forgotten her charger.

She was headed to Pittsburgh. Papa had collapsed on the bus on the way home from work.

He was lucky, Mama had said on the phone, there were people around him. They helped him!

Mama seemed surprised that humans, ordinary people, would come to the aid of a stranger.

I'll never be able to thank them, Mama had said. I don't know who they are.

It was just like her mother to worry about thanking people while her husband lay in an induced coma.

How many of those bus passengers, aglow with witness status, were describing the story to their families and friends between bites of their supper?

There's no need to come now, Giuseppina, Mama had said, when you'd just have to wait.

Pina's hangover was only then lifting near the tail end of a sluggish workday, but how could she *not* go?

Well, if you want to, Mama said. But don't you have work? He wouldn't want you to miss work.

Work! If her parents, descendants of descendants of Italian immigrants, had any sense of the sacred, it was for work. Coal had collapsed, but the coke industry had kept going. Pittsburgh to Morgantown to Youngstown, then Pittsburgh again, wherever the company sent him. Nothing could interfere with work. For Pina, receptionist by day, bartender by night, work interfered with everything.

She imagined her mother at the kitchen table, fingernails bitten down to the quicks, the counters cleared of any sign of food and iced with a chalky film of Ajax. Her sisters were already there, Maria and Gina, always dutiful, the ones who didn't leave, married local guys, became bambini factories.

Where's your sense of direction? Maria, the oldest, liked to ask.

I've never had a sense of direction, she'd say, laughing off the criticism. It was true. Maybe metaphorically, but also literally.

How sweet it would be to call up a map of anywhere—the United States, Pittsburgh, Brooklyn—in her mind. To situate herself instantly in relation to the four cardinal points. An inner compass. She'd give her pinky fingers and toes to be able to climb out of any subway station and by instinct know which way to go, destination and route ingrained, like a migrating bird.

God knows Papa had tried to teach her, standing over an atlas at the table, but he was a geologist, not a teacher, and his intimate knowledge of the earth above ground and underground did not root in her.

Her phone had GPS, but she hadn't wanted to use up the battery and she was scared to rely on it. Sometimes it led her on a wild goose chase or spit her out the wrong way down one-way streets. In Italian: Senso Unico. Unique sense.

The cop got out of the cruiser and held his palms up, stopping anymore cars from advancing. She couldn't see what was happening but *something* was happening beyond the tollbooths.

Her bladder ached. She ejected the David Bowie cd. The exhaust of all the cars idling—the lucky ones with air conditioning—felt suffocating without any hint of a breeze.

There had to be a bathroom for the toll collectors, though actual live human collectors were becoming endangered species.

More sirens and lights, this time from the other side of the tollbooths. The low, keening note of an ambulance. Someone hurt. How awful, and yet she also couldn't help but feel aggravated because she was stuck. Is that how some of the bus passengers had felt when the stroke hit her father? Tired from work, school, just aching to be home, shoes off, dinner on the table. Maybe one or more riders anxious to relieve a home nurse aid, to soothe an aging parent, a sick spouse.

After her Papa was taken away by ambulance, what did the other bus passengers do? How awkward and silent the rest of their ride must have been.

What if she stood on top of her car and yelled, *My papa is dying and I have to pee!* But what made her situation more dire than anyone else's?

In the car behind her sat a man and woman, she assumed married. A couple of kids bounced around to cheery music in the back. The woman's head was turned to the window, chin in hand, perhaps contemplating divorce. Or worse.

Pina's phone rang. As soon as she answered, her sister Gina's alto voice interrupted. Where are you?