

CARNIVORES

by Edward Einhorn

(A restaurant in New York. Two patrons, a MAN and a WOMAN, are eating. The MAN has a plate full of sausages. The WOMAN has a salad. The WOMAN is crying.)

MAN

(bites into a sausage)

Ah. There's nothing like a sausage, is there, Ethel? You remember, don't you? I mean, you weren't always a vegetarian, right?

(Silence. The WOMAN cries.)

There's something about the feel of it. More than the taste. I mean, the taste is all right. The taste is great. But the feel...the rubbery surface of it. And then your teeth sink into it, their points pushing at the skin as you puncture it, penetrating into its chewy, meaty center. But not all meat. There's always those little hard nuggets inside, secret prizes, you know what I'm talking about, those flecks of black or white or brown that inhabit the sausage, a puzzle when you look at them. "What was that?" you wonder Bone? Gristle? Hoof? It could be anything. Brain? Liver? Cock? It's whatever they threw into the grinder. Because when you eat a sausage, the pleasure comes not only from the meat, not only from the shiny, liquid fat that squeezes its way out of the pores of the thing with each bite. It comes from the whole creature, the whole beast. It's like they took a bit from everywhere and threw it in together. And then came up with a new creature, a new hairless, reddish brown creature with a greasy stink about it, just waiting to be slipped down your gullet. Or *my* gullet, I should say. I know you wouldn't slip it down *your* gullet.

(Silence. The WOMAN cries.)

You know, they say the pig is one of the smartest animals? Smarter even than dogs. Much smarter than cats. But if they're so smart, why do they get turned into sausage, while the dogs and cats get to be our pets? Why aren't we, or I should say I, eating dog or cat sausage right at this very minute. I guess they do eat that, in China or somewhere, where they're all starving. They'd eat their own mothers, there.

(Silence. The WOMAN cries.)

I wonder what dog sausage would taste like. Gamey, I'd say. Stringy. They don't look that appetizing. Cat sausage would have a smell about it, I'd guess. From all that fish they eat. If they even have enough meat on them to make a decent sausage. Which I doubt. Scrawny, selfish little creatures, cats.

(Silence. The WOMAN cries.)

But why is it, really, that we eat pigs, and not dogs or cats? It's because dogs and cats are hunters. Ever see a cat chase a rat, or a bird? Or a dog chase a cat? They're vicious things, those pets of ours. But they have courage. Courage to do what we humans really want to do, if we only had that same courage. Courage enough to chase a living creature until it's caught and sink their teeth into its living flesh. They don't need sausages. Oh, they'll have them, don't get me wrong. If it's put in front them, they'll eat it. Who wouldn't? But they don't need it. They don't need to hide from what it really was. They like the feeling of appeasing their hunger on a living beast. They like feeling the life slip away from their victim as it fills their stomach. That's their greatest thrill. Who would want a mealy mouthed pig for a pet, too frightened to catch its food, too frightened to kill when it's hungry. Do you know what pigs do when they're hungry? They put their snout to the ground and dig.

(Silence. The WOMAN cries.)

Carnivores. That's what we like. That's what we all are, at heart. Except the pigs and their relations. The pigs will eat anything you throw into their trough. Lettuce, radishes, tomatoes. Croutons. Anything. They don't discriminate. But even the pigs, I'm telling you, even the pigs would kill, if they were strong enough. They spend their days rolling in the muck instead of facing the world as it is, because they're afraid to face it. Afraid to know what's coming for them. But what's coming for them is no different than what's coming for all of us. For them it's just a little faster and a little more obvious.

(Silence. The WOMAN cries.)

Sure you don't want a bite, Ethel?

(Silence. The WOMAN cries.)

It's up to you. It's up to you. It's always up to you.