

front of him. Was that a tuberculous lesion? Were those parasites important? Which carcass belonged to which viscera? Ivan blinked back tears of frustration and anger. Didn't they know how stupid they were? What a relief when Jim returned. He motioned Ivan to put his knife away and swept the pile of guts down the chute, restoring order.

"When it's like that," explained Jim, "there's nothing you can do. It's best to save time and start again."

For the first time in his life, Ivan experienced a sense of profound failure, and he felt shame that he might be responsible for contaminated meat being served on someone's plate.

Later, it was Ivan's turn to help out on a carcass back-log. All his movements now were robotic. The agony of heat and pain and frustration had left him. All he felt was a fog of numbness. He hacked in dumb routine at nodes, first the hind-quarters then the middle, working his way down each body to the head. Everyone was working under pressure. A butcher working beside Ivan flung the next carcass along just before Ivan straightened up and turned towards it. It came hurtling at him with a clatter. The warning shout came as the point of his knife caught the pig in the ribs. Three fingers of Ivan's right hand slid along the blade's edge which bit deeply and stopped at bone.

## ROSANNE MUSU

### HOOK

Thumb jabbed.

Red spurt from a cruel barbed fishhook.

Eyes squeezed shut out pain.

Jaw clamped holds in yelps and

suddenly

I am in another sun, eleven.  
Angling off rocks with cane rods.  
Eleven, and inept at it. Outfished  
by a brother with a pail of mullet  
to take home.  
Smells of evil bait, entrails, salt  
and blind to the now . . .  
of boat and coming rain.  
And this hook removable only  
with my brother's pliers.  
If he were here.

## DAVID BOLLIGER

Straggling in the streets  
With her child in her arms  
Suicide rain  
Nighttime wind  
They found her hanged  
The baby crying beside  
But the final gesture  
Was waiting inside  
Three places set  
With a rose and a knife  
Last supper light  
Suicide wife