

# Flesh and Blood

*by* Claire King

Sunday, city farm. Bickering on the bus as always. Panic swells my throat. But then for once they click, finding shared delight in suckling lambs and pot-bellied pigs.

“Lamb chops,” I say. “Bacon.”

Their heartbreak is followed by cheese sandwich solidarity.

On Monday I cook coq au vin. Fatty yellow skin detached and floating in the sauce. Folded arms and pushed away plates. Stereo disgust.

On Tuesday I bake trout, slimy with garlic butter. Bones and eyes left in.

“Fish are not vegetables,” they say, their fingers locked under the table.

Tonight I serve up bleeding lumps of gristly flesh.

“Cows,” I say, and wince at the slamming door.

I stand outside their room as they close ranks, tearing me to pieces with whispers sharp as butchers' knives. My fingers pick idly at malignant cells and the hall clock marks the minutes that remain.

