

Sausages

by Deborah Oster Pannell

When I cook sausages, I am afraid I will not let them sit in the pan long enough, and they will be pink inside. Then, even if the pigs have been handled humanely, I and the person for whom I've prepared this meal will be at risk for some terrible stomach poisoning.

Let's say for a moment that this meal is being served to another adult, perhaps someone with whom I'm having sex, and it comes on the heels of a night when we have gotten little sleep because we were up late exploring new positions. I should say that my son is not in this story, because for one, his presence would have made the long night of experimental sex unlikely, because his bed is just on the other side of the wall, but also, because if I was serving him breakfast sausage, especially the thick homemade kind you buy at Whole Foods, I would have cut it into smaller pieces before I cooked it. This would have been natural to do for my child, and it would have cut down on the risk of undercooking. But I don't feel as comfortable pre-cutting sausage for my lover. We haven't known each other that long, and I'm not sure if he would have thought it presumptuous of me to take such liberties with his food.

My lover is a particular sort of man. He folds his clothes neatly before he comes to bed, and he smells freshly washed. I love to nuzzle my face in his crotch where it smells of vanilla and bay leaves and not at all like pee. Once he asked me to take a shower with him before bed, and I was thinking that it was maybe because he didn't like the way I smelled.

Suppose I did undercook the meat, and it did make us sick. I wonder if he would hold my hair back for me as I vomited, or would he leave me to the cool slick of the bathroom tiles to find my own comfort in their stillness.

