

Waste

by Dianne McKnight-Warren

When the compost thaws the past oozes out into the present through the holes we drilled close to the bottom of a round plastic trash bin where we stash peelings, pits, stems, leaves--all the parts we carried out in a slop bucket last summer, fall, and winter, now putrefied into brown goo, a delicacy to our dogs who lie flat out on the ground licking at the holes like suckling piglets on a big green teat. Soon we'll tip the bin over the chicken wire fence and the viscous mass will make a long sucking sound as it slides out of its plastic womb and settles like a huge rotted jello mold on a pile of leaves, sticks and twigs, and the weeds we pulled last summer. We'll cover the shimmying slime with more leaves, water it down, and let it cook. All summer and into fall it will simmer, radiating enough heat to show steam at the first frost. Worms will come from far and deep to dine, eat at it until it's gone, turned into their poop. (How wonderful it must be to slither through one's own waste not minding at all!) Next year we'll spread their black gold on the garden to grow bright things with peelings, pits, stems, and leaves.

When we die we can cook too, in a big pressure cooker that turns us into a liquid that "looks like oil" a mortician said on tv, but can be poured right down the drain.

