

Cow Juice

by Marcy Dermansky

Theresa stopped speaking to me because I ate cows. This made things simple. There was no conversation. Our parents had gone to Hawaii for the month of July and left me in charge of the house. It's hard to say what was going on with me and all the meat I was consuming. Meat. I couldn't eat enough cow. Maybe it's because I'd been so screwed up about food for so long. It was a combination of the anorexia, bulimia, the spiritual fasting, and those intense chocolate highs. Anyway, it had been forever since I'd eaten meat, since I had actually chewed, and suddenly I had a new boyfriend, Jordan Stopman, the plumber who came to the house one rainy afternoon to fix our clogged toilet. Jordan called me skinny as if skinny was a bad thing; he took me to a McDonalds and bought me a quarter pounder with cheese. "Trust the cow," he said. Wow. When was the last time I had a hamburger? Wow. Oh wow. "This is so good," I said. I felt like dancing. "Oh My God." Jordan grinned at me. "Your parents have an excellent grill," he said. It was a gas grill, the best model you can buy at the Super K-mart. I thought I had reached nirvana with my Mickey Dee's, and then Jordan grilled me an enormous burger. This was before he introduced me to steak. Theresa, my little sister, is a principled girl. She has to be. She wears great big glasses and has these heavy braces. Somewhere beneath all that equipment is a girl with a face, but you can't find it, because she talks and she talks, most of it about global warming and the cows. What a waste of the earth's resources to grow cows for consumption. We should be farming alfalfa. Poor people all over the world that nobody cares about, the grains we should be feeding them, and why a vegetarian diet is best.

I'm getting it all wrong, of course, because I never actually listen to Theresa. For years and years, what did I think about? Being skinnier and skinnier still. Now it's Jordan, sex, and meat.

Jordan is fine, but that night we grilled t-bone steaks. Oh. You could hear the juices popping. Theresa glared at me from the lit kitchen. Jordan rubbed a piece of glistening steak fat on my collar bone and without thinking, I pulled my green ribbed tank top right over my head. I could see Theresa's cold glare from that bright kitchen as Jordan licked that delicious cow juice from my breasts. Then the light went out in the kitchen.

