

## THE BUTCHERING

Now this is butchering: the cornered hog  
Groveling in mud is coaxed up to the trough  
The farmer slopped: his twenty-two is cocked.  
He fires a shot between the eyes, and bone  
Splinters and splashes as the lead sinks home.

Up at the farmhouse little children hear  
Pigs squealing in complaint: such women tear  
Flesh in more ways than one because they bear  
Children in labor: so they grit their teeth  
And long to tell the children it is meat.

And it is meet, of course, to stick the hog.  
He straddles it the way he would a log  
And rides another sacrifice to God  
That gave him children who will understand  
Why the knife flashes in their father's hand.

*Harold Fleming*