

## HARD-BOILED EGGS

"I hate having to spend part of my life peeling eggs,"  
my friend tells me. I don't agree.  
I like the way the shell comes off in curved pieces  
like little hats and cups and dishes,  
like shards of light bulb  
or the globe I dropped and smashed in the third grade.

I like the patterns the shell makes when it cracks;  
like when a rock crashes into a windshield:  
you don't know what keeps the pieces together,  
but they stay.  
I like the way chunks of egg cling to the shell  
like flesh sticking to a band-aid.

I like the way, when eggs break boiling,  
eggwhite balloons out and hardens  
like sap on a tree, or sometimes  
the whole yoke goes, growing outside  
the shell like one of those ectopic pregnancies  
women die from to this day.

I like the feel of an egg in my hand:  
quivery as a fresh-plucked eye or testicle,  
firm but giving as a young girl's breast.  
I like the way an egg looks dressed in half a shell,  
like a soldier in his helmet.  
just a boy really, with his soft white skin —

or like an acorn in its cup, or a bullet in its casing;  
the yoke, a yellow pit in a white peach.  
I like the symbolism: egg as potential;  
oval pellet of possibilities.  
I like the smell of eggs — primitive, fundamental —  
and the memories they bring:

my mother making my lunch;  
Dennis Van Deventer opening his mouth full  
of devilled egg, making Cyndy Symington throw up.  
I like the way when you slice eggs  
pieces of white leap to the surface  
and flip around like guppies in a net.

I drop the eggs — rubbery toadstools,  
lopsided golf balls — into my red tupperware dish.  
I glop on mayo, mash them up, then grinning  
like the world's finest lunch-time artiste,  
I spread them on fresh bread,  
top with lettuce and pepper, and feast.