

## The Cannibal Test

- When I prepare the chile, I take care to toss aside the veins and seeds into the shaded toad-cracks in my stone-pile.
- Among my chile are poblano, blister-pear, and peasant's thorn. Scorched, they blister and shed a parchment. I peel it free, like carving up a potter's thumb.
- Sometimes I prefer other fruit and nut articles: the natal plum, the alligator pear and alligator apple, the Malayapple, Barbados cherry, Spanish lime, bullock's heart, Queensland nut, St. Johnsbread, rose-apple, pigeon-plum, or printerbean, brain-berry, maid's-knuckle, heartnut.
- I made no fuss when the brightness of names, light of lime, turned commoner in use and laid slick lard upon my lips and tongue. Like throwing names to toads.
- I aim at cats. To earn precision for my long strangle-fingers, I Take away the weightless soft prehension of the tiger's tail.
- I settle at my table, smile back  
at the long  
peeled dog  
upon the platter. ■