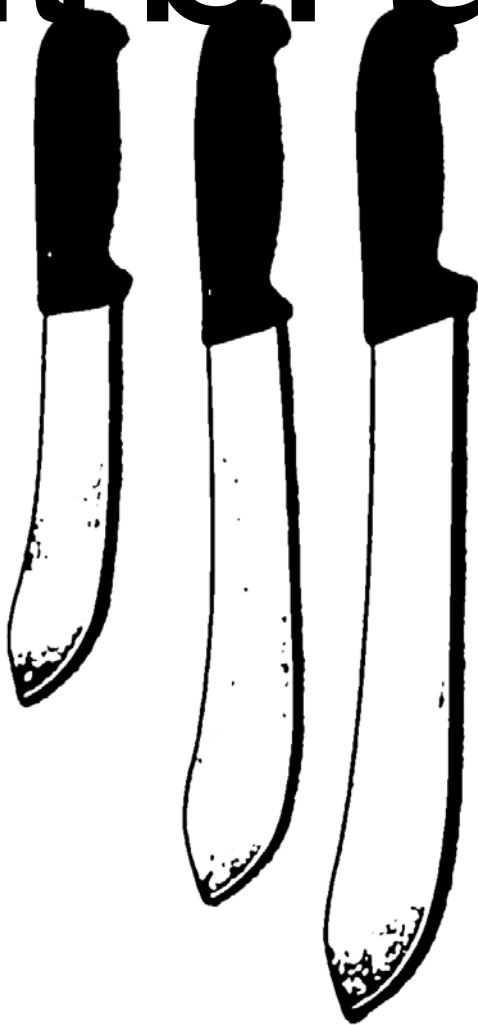


In the Raw



Adrian Caesar

The butchers of Australia are a cheery lot
with their quivers of bright steel
they are quick to parcel jest
bundling steak snags and chops
with a wink and nod
flirtatious gallant matey
as if they have come to terms
with flesh and find it all game
there is no anger in them
the bright edge of their instruments
cleaves to the brutal truth
of appetite and mortality
to have blood on their hands
is all in a day's work
they know how to negotiate spleen
and that heart is a tough muscle
they feed the rich nation
and lie content in bed whole
intimate with dismemberment
they are tender with wives
and in the matter of loins tolerant
of a little fat and gristle in their lives
knowing this is the body's way
they are philosophers who leave
tragedy to vegetarians
comedy suits their laughing style
their answer to hunger is cutting.

Adrian Caesar is a Canberra writer who occasionally teaches Creative Writing part-time at A.N.U. He is currently seeking a publisher for his next book of poems and working on a novel. 