



here be

monsters

COLIN CHENEY

THE NATIONAL POETRY SERIES

SELECTED BY DAVID WOJAHN

Considering John Mark Karr with Laura McPhee's Photographs of the River of No Return

Mattie, thirteen, gives us a bourbon turkey, weight-splayed wings freckled with blood — *She's so serious*, my friend says. Newly interested in charcuterie — twenty yards of pig intestine on his basement fridge door — he's told me the trick is binding the fats to the ground pork & beef, fennel & juniper berries so the sausage will hold together. In the next room, in her eighth grade graduation dress, Mattie gives us another bird, a red-shafted northern flicker, if buckshot or found where frost-stiff fladry spook wolves, we can only imagine. Imagine your sister hunting the field behind the barn in her Snow White costume your mother had sewn for her, searching for the rabid fox her father had shot with a borrowed gun, buried shallow. I'm watching myself in picture glass. Imagine wanting to murder a child — the bird's wings taut between her hands. The problem with pancetta, my friend is saying, isn't curing the pork belly with bay, cumin & salt or finding someplace dark enough to hang the bound meat, or even the waiting.