

DO NOT EAT YOUR FRIENDS

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ARTIST STATEMENT

Disclaimer: This poem in no way encourages self-harm or auto-cannibalism or the cannibalism of others. Please do not hurt yourselves or others, and please do seek help, treatment, and support if you do.

Many people don't realize that working ourselves past our limits is a form of self-harm. When we strain ourselves past a healthy level for our goals, we can damage ourselves and our bodies in the process. I wrote this poem to describe that feeling of burnout and the desperation that comes at the price of your body. This is a prevalent issue, especially in the world of academics. Some examples are refusing yourself sleep, food, or relief until you accomplish a task, taking on more work or stress that you are physically able to endure, competing and comparing yourself constantly with peers or mentors, or enduring long, extended periods of mental and physical exertion. We often praise hard work and discipline, claiming that ultimately, accomplishing our goals justify the sacrifices we make along the way. In a way, I thought it sounded like praising hunger while denying your body its basic need for food.

I wanted to describe the feeling of being so utterly hungry that you start to eat yourself.

However, please do refrain from consuming your flesh or the flesh of your friends! There are better, more nutritious sources of protein.

what organ holds all your want?
what hoards, man, c'mon what hoards your hunger?
your thirsting haunt, your wanting, your detente
of this aching, fucking gnawing
teeth of stomachs, weak with enough
enough you would think it would be enough

tongue, it tastes rust, degrees, and possession
and it craves everything it tastes the rest in
its obsessive chest compressions, i can't, i can't
i can't breathe, in my ribs
i could chew your ears off just to listen

i could eat you, all of it
your body, full of itself and stalls a bit
as I eat up the envy inside my ambition
oh my god, just fucking listen
to my stomach, louder than trachea
louder than my fucking fuck-me-up
I crave your flesh, and nothing! nothing less

carve out my liver, i can live without it
i can go live my life without myself to doubt it
clean out the insides, butcher up the cord
to the carnivorous bible, written on breadboard
i am a cleaver, so devout

now I need thyme
lemongrass, and fall, winter seasoning
garlic salt to stimulate and sting the bedbugs
that crouch upon my tongue
they crave my flesh too, you know, so

put the heat on simmer, and the hissing
of my precious liver kissing the body oil and body fat
a sexual ritual, habitual of my
tongue and something else, no, someone
somebody to whom I can gift my right-hand lung

when the meat is tendered, fat rendered
and your hunger has not yet surrendered
do not eat your friends
that is impolite
slightly wash your hands, and then,
invite

them to sit, to fit them with a bib
giddy, offer them a rib
cage and then ask for wine
this is what they mean by body fine

with knife and butter seduce the meat
don't be afraid to cut me
smother it with grave and biscuit
and eat it all, all of it
don't you dare fucking stop
you don't need no fork
nor knife nor bitter butter up
use your nails to cut it up
and lick your fingers
lick, or bite them off
the crunch of bones and fuck-me-up
suck off the flavor, the grease and bathe me
with your unsatiated tongue

i don't know what you're trying to taste from your insides in
trying to diagnose what makes your hunger widen

seriously
hurry the fuck up, just swallow
do you now know
know which organ houses your hunger?
or will we have to eat another one?