



Carlo Silvestrini on the HOG SLAUGHT

by Greg Alan Brownderville

Hog-killing day, wind face-chap cold.
Fever got me good, woozing up my thought.
I seeing triple, hunger-fangs take a hold.

Fire over water in a big black pot,
Papa slit hog throat, rope him round the head,
hang him from a gum tree, douse him right hot,

shave him cleany pink. Next part I dread.
Stab hog in the heart, let bright blood.
For blood pie sake, save a pail a red.

Rain, sleet, snow blows up, make shitty mud.
Stray mutt twitchy from the swamp, slobber beard,
coughing like a brimstone preacher mongst the crud.

One dog, see, make three to me. I get skeered.
Papa toss him hog gut slime. Sky's dark guts
ooze out, turn the light blue-weird.

Papa clean intestines and, checking for cuts,
blow them up a like balloons. Mash B-grade meat
for sausage links and the salt-skin gobbets

dry to cracklins. Tongue, lips, ears, and feet
pickled or ground to hogshead cheese.
Ain't too much here a man can't eat.

Annual February hog-killing demonstration at the Old South Farm Museum, Woodland, Georgia, 2008. Photograph by Angie Mosier.

Loin for lonza, quarters for prosciutto
Sugar, yeast, meal, and raisin make cake out of boiled backbone.
Drop liver, heart, and kidney fresh in a grease,

sizzle with some pepper, salt, and onion.
Scramble brains with eggs and fry.
Cut fat and skin in bits, boil them in a cauldron

for the family lard—year supply.
Muddy man-shadows making rag soap, scald
waste fat and mix it up with lye.

Only hair, hoof, intestine goop, and teeth get culled.
No smokehouse, no stable,
so we move inside. Papa rub a thick coat a salt

in a fat slab. We store it on the cypress table
in my leaky room, where it smells
up my dreams. Dirty snow buries my Bible,

chills my bed. Through knotholes
in the floor of my head, I see a red-eye rabid dog
and I'm skeered every night when the black blanket falls,

I'll feed a snorting ghost ripped from a hog. 🍷

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PIMENTO CHEESE IN THE NORTH CAROLINA PIEDMONT

From home to work and back again

by Emily Wallace

IN EARLY NOVEMBER, my aunt sent an e-mail to my extended family with a plan for Thanksgiving. The standbys were there—my mother would bring pecan pie; my Aunt Judy, deviled eggs; and so on. But then came a new suggestion. My name appeared with pimento cheese.

A month before, I'd wrapped up my master's thesis in folklore on the subject, and what the holiday e-mail made clear was that my relatives were eager to taste the results. Though no definitive recipe for the spread appears in my work, I made a batch and presented it with a plate of crackers at our Thanksgiving dinner. My family cooed.

"So this is what you came up with? It's good," they told me. But in their eyes, what I'd brought to the table was, in fact, nothing new. I'm pretty sure that my cousins thought their mother's recipe superior to mine, and, as each of my relatives had mentioned or forwarded me an article about pimento cheese at some point, they knew that I was definitely not the first to pen something about the spread.

Almost every national newspaper or magazine, it seems, has made some mention of pimento cheese in the last year. And forget just slapping it on bread or crackers. More and more menus tack