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Animals

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ANIMALS

Animals die and we eat them. Animals die so we can eat them. Animals are born and then we kill them, so we can eat them. There are generations of living things created solely for consumption, and it's nothing new, the use of living things. It's evolution—we're quite handy at it now. There are stacked pens full of big white chickens, with their beaks clipped off: Broilers, a subspecies named for how they're cooked. They've lived their lives when their breasts grow so heavy they topple forward and cannot regain their feet. White meat. Maximum yield. Consumable men are a different story though—we are equals-equals-equals—so it's an accident that they exist. The end of the path of least resistance, least effort, not particularly followed, but trailed along until it's overgrown. Have you ever noticed that all the down-and-out-plotline-movies have a meatpacking plant, a slaughterhouse, a cattle yard? The dismal men and women shown beside the slit necks of foot-hung chickens and the panic-rolling fist-sized eyes of bludgeoned cows that refuse to go down easy, that keep fighting up from their knees, struggling, struggling. And we are supposed to compare and contrast and be moved and pity man and beast that are used interchangeably, and always, the villain is the guy who rather than snapping the rabbit's neck cleanly and throwing it on the heap to be beheaded and skinned, crosses its ears in an X and nails it to the

wall still living, and later on he'll be the gang leader in the gang rape scene and he'll have the harshest laugh and the most glittering eyes and when the credits are rolling they'll be whispering through the theater, about knowing a man's character by his treatment of animals, and even as the audience is speaking, shuffling down the tight rows between the seats, a sheep's eyes are being lined with kohl and a sugar cube offered and its throat slit, and a cow wreathed in flowers, artery punctured, still dies more slowly than we could bear, but, it was always meant to die. All things are, so all things do, and so a cat is on fire, running willy-nilly, back and forth, to and fro, shrieking like a meteor, and there are maybe four boys laughing together, watching and washing gasoline from their hands with a garden hose, and a fifth boy has run away. So he'll be the one that doesn't make it, strung up, cut, or brought to his knees.