

Well, son, we could
always throw
the pigskin around

Jody Azzouni

Originally published in
Hiram Poetry Review
Fall 1992-Spring 1993
© 1993, 2001 Jody Azzouni

Time was,
I would have introduced you to blood,
taught you to slice open the throat,
strip the skin from the carcass gracefully.
Cooking didn't come naturally to anyone,
you understand,
so in those days we forced the women
to burn the food, and in this way
we could press something hot
against our lips again.
They never figured out the thrill,
never saw what we were grinning about
while the hot juices drooled down our faces.

Time was,
I would have taught you to love blood,
the relatives I mean, the tribe,
and kill those your genes didn't recognize.
Not long ago,
we could have gunned down Indians together
and told your mother how the bodies twitched
while she served us hot turkey.
Even these days we can raise the blood
with chatter about the homeland,
send the dumber ones
off for blood.

Maybe I shouldn't tell *you*,
but sometimes I doubt we'll survive
unless they perfect cloning soon,
let the daughters, like soft amoebas,

inherit the earth.
(But this wouldn't help,
for they would trace bloodlines
anyway, and group into families,
tight like fists.)

Blood is thicker than water,
but fishing has its thrills too:
the betrayal of something by its instincts,
the cold steel in the velvet flesh it must obey.
You haul it in by a thread,
the animal silent as if the hook
has ripped its voice out.
There's a lesson here I can't teach;
you'll have to mutate your own way to it.