Cook for the Condemned

Who cooks for those who are about to die,  
goes looking in the rain for saffron,  
bakes corn meal muffins from scratch,  
inspects fresh veal at the market the way lovers explore,

understands appetites that summon the tepid stew of limbo,  
conjure the meringue of heaven,  
foreshadow the cayenne of hell?

Who feeds the sociopath’s longing for rack of lamb,  
the supremacist’s obsession with a slab of baby backribs,  
the psychotic’s hunger for steak tartare?

Like any of us, does he have a favorite dish,  
something to feature  
like a good haircut or a new girlfriend?  
An artist needs room in the commission to improvise.

Imagine him,  
intoxicate beneath a gallows of skillet and copper pot,  
flesh and hair anointed with onion and garlic,  
fingers glistening with virgin olive oil,  
tossing warm pink bodies of jumbo shrimp,  
sliding the sauté pan forward,  
jerking it out from underneath  
the startled somersault of so many victims.