

## **Hooded**

**by Collette Cowie**

The chicken skin returns  
snail-slow and deliberate  
from its slippy, gritty massage.  
Limbs trussed,  
folded like a baby birthed;  
curled, still tight as a bud,  
shaped by the cavity it once occupied  
with such intention and portent.

Balanced on haunches,  
both hands occupied by the weight of a roasting tin,  
I catch my eyes, startled  
in the glass of the oven door.  
Arrested for one second by the whites,  
yellow-stained and ill-used as smoker's fingers,  
the papery skin below;  
the creased grey-lilac.

Much later, chicken eaten,  
I stare at the screen  
without reflection.  
The sidebar distracts  
with titles **Recommended For You**.  
Scrolling down, I notice:  
**Hooded & Ageing: ways to disguise**.  
I regard the stare  
of the old lady's kohl-lined eyes.  
I wonder how they know.