

BUCK SKIN

You don't expect the purple of the organs
blossoming not like a bruise but the velvet

of iris, dark in its white sheath, streaked
with the shocking Hammer film red

of the arterial gush. The bristle-stiff
skin parts like drapery and the underfoot dirt

clumps into entrail mud. The hooves
could be wooden, the eyes dulled to marbles,

the balls sliced loose and tossed
back like a tent flap. The knife

is curved and sharp and the men, even him,
skilled and focused. Handle of bone,

slit-eyed insistence. Why are you afraid?
There is nothing he can't see, nothing

you could hide if you tried. There is blood.
There is dirt. There is a hanging

head for a trophy. Viscera and vitals,
your liver and your lights. The grass blood-slick

under the swinging carcass, the dripping
weave of the dispassionate knife.

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