

Squash

Named in 1610 after the Lord
De La Warr, the state is home
to Dupont, once a gunpowder plant.
Mix 3 cups pumpkin, 3/4 cup honey
and a pinch of curry powder
for a killer pumpkin pudding.

Washington crossed its river
to war against 2 troops. Crush
1 pound pumpkin flesh, sauté
in butter, add white stock
for a soup of gold.

Slave-holders until the end
of 1865, punishing
women at the whipping post
till 1889, Delawareans were last
to abolish the pillory, 1905.
For No-Fault Squash,
mash 4 cups pumpkin
and 4 beaten eggs.

If you follow
the news, you might learn
that Delaware is home
to seventy thousand poor;
and that each Halloween,
its farmers use cranes
to hurl leftover pumpkins
far as a mile, over
their emptied patches.

Crowds cheer each smashed
squash. A reporter closes
his coat against the chill
and laughs, What else could be
done with all those pumpkins?

Self-Defense

The man on T.V., a blond-braided

Texan, former kick-box
champion, speaks about Yim Wang Chun,
a Shaolin nun who created
Kung Fu. A woman's way to be
safe, I reason, writing
down the toll-free number.

A week later, he instructs us
to tear testicles from the groin, thrust
fist into throat: force the hard
part of a woman
into the soft part
of a man.

Now punch! One! Two!

We practice fists, protect
the thumb.

One! Two!
Men are as easy
to hurt
as you.

One friend's ex-lover
once fired at us both. Can flesh
match the bullet's rush?
I kissed her blue lips,
blew breath the pierced lung refused.

One! Two!
Men are as easy
to hurt and kill
as you.

Predator or prey: what happened
to Buddha's Middle Way?

Left! Right!

Both hands hurt. I open
my fists, palms up.

Jennifer Arin's writings have been published in both the U.S. and Europe, including in The
AWP Writer's Chronicle, The San Francisco Chronicle Sunday Book Review, Gastronomica,

Puerto del Sol, Poet Lore, ZYZZYVA, Chain, Paris/Atlantic Review, and The Chronicle of Higher Education, among others. Recent awards include a Solas Culture and Ideas prize, a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a PEN Writer's Fund grant, a Poets & Writers Writers-On-Site Residency, and funding from the Spanish Ministry of Culture for research for, and editing of, a book about Spain's Civil War. She teaches in the English Department at San Francisco State University.