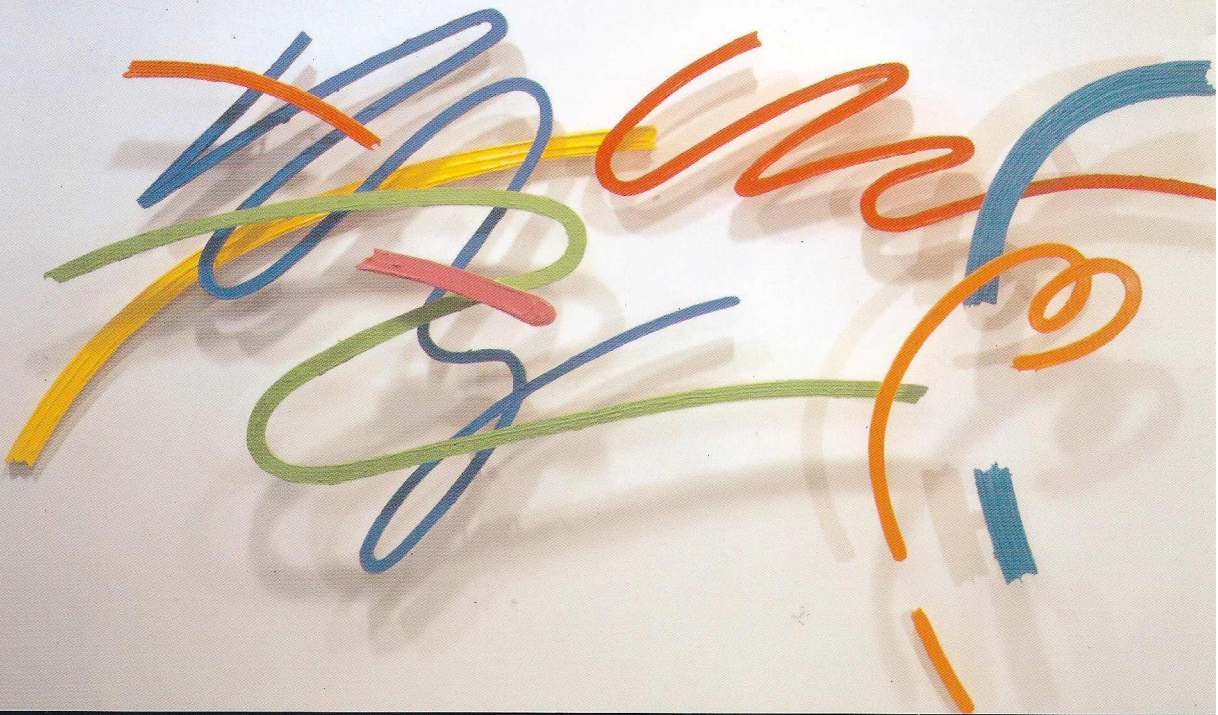


Making Sense

Second Edition

A Real-World Rhetorical Reader



Cheryl Glenn

SECOND EDITION

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Casebook: Vegetarianism

ANDY KERR

On Eating Meat

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Why, on this lovely but cold day, am I carrying this very high-powered 1
weapon? It's a crisp November morn in Oregon's Blue Mountains. The
light of first dawn is creeping down the opposite canyon wall and will
soon reach me. It's about time. I warm at the sight of the sun-struck old
growth ponderosa pine. If they have taken several centuries of cold
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Not yet fully awake and still tired from a long night in a down 2
sleeping bag whose loft is as down and out as they come, I walked with
James up the river trail well before sunrise to meet the other four mem-
bers of our hunting party. A more hardy lot than James or I (maybe just
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The bivouac was our latest theory on how best to kill a Rocky 3
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I am standing in a half-foot of snow at the mouth of a creek that 4
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sojourn through the pines now in full sun. Not only will they come

through here I reason, but most importantly I won't have to get my feet wet crossing the stream.

Why am I here? Oh yes, to kill an elk. Not a pleasant assignment, but since I choose—for now at least—to eat flesh, I should at least attempt to personally acquire some of it each year. Since I currently eat and enjoy eating what once very much breathed such as I, should I not take the moral responsibility for the slaughtering and butchering?

As I prepared for “elk camp,” several of my liberal friends and associates, when informed of my pending absence, said in effect, “have a good time and I hope you don't get anything.”

I would smile and repress my urge to shout “You hypocritical bastards! Where in hell do you think meat comes from? Not the goddamn supermarket all neatly sliced on Styrofoam and encased in cellophane. No, it comes from living animals who *died* by human hands to bring it to you. Now, if you haven't got the gonads to do it, that's one thing, but don't give me shit for taking direct responsibility for it.”

Like I said, I suppressed those thoughts.

During the same period, I also encountered vegetarians who said the same thing. That I could better tolerate.

I shuffle around, taking a quick tour of my stand. The river flows below, snow mounds on the exposed rocks. The clouds tumble past quickly overhead, evidence of the high winds aloft. A noisy raven glides high to the south. I stare at a melting icicle, timing in my mind the drips.

Suddenly I get the feeling that I'm being watched. That hard to describe creepy feeling of being watched. Perhaps my paranoia, but just because you are paranoid doesn't mean you are not being followed. I slowly turn and confirm my feeling. It's Tim, 30 yards up the trail with one of his near continuous cigarettes hanging out of his mouth. I now catch the smell of the smoke on the wind.

He stands there with his Nordic complexion, with hair more white than blonde and his moustache submerging in four days worth of beard. I nod and he proceeds quietly. We meet. No blood on his hands. The elk are safe again. We chat in whispers and take nips from his whiskey flask. I don't care much for the stuff, but it tastes good now. We shift positions to better utilize the warmth of the sun. He relates his bivouac tale.

“Didn't see a thing. Fresh tracks everywhere, but not an animal in sight. I know they are in there. Heard some shots. I was hoping they were you guys. Where's Jim?”

“You know how he is,” I whispered.

“Yeah . . . , maybe the shots were Tommy. Heard one shot, followed by three in rapid succession.”

We chat on quietly waiting for the others. Soon, Tommy shows up. Just as Nordic as Tim and a half-foot shorter, Tommy skips up to us with a big shit-eatin' grin on his face. No blood on his hands either. He *always* has that shit-eatin' grin. We repeat our earlier chat, this time not quite as

quietly. Tommy throws in lewd and obscene comments at every available opportunity. He's the horniest man in Oregon and makes no pretenses about it. Rumor has it that he has a closet full of negligees in all colors and sizes for whomever may be at his cabin. It is further rumored that he has a complete set of diaphragms ("You look like about a 48") in case his woman friend didn't bring hers.

The flask passes again and our conversation is at a near normal level. 17
Out of the corner of my eye, I see another walking body. We turn to see a lanky, tall man of 24 who acts a rightful 30, lumbering toward us with his rifle strung over his shoulder. A large pinch of Copenhagen serves to give the effect of a fat lip. No blood on his hands either. Again, we repeat our tales to Steve, who adds a few of his own. Our talk is now at a roar and is liberally aided by Steve's George Dickel "sippin' whiskey."

"Who the hell fired those shots?" roared Steve. "I thought it was you," 18
as he points with his whiskey bottle to Tommy.

"I wish," grins Tommy. 19

"Our only hope is Marty. And where is Jim?" says Tim. 20

"We'll find him on the way out," I offered. 21

The conversation is now at a full tavern roar. We finally hear a wild 22
whoop down by the creek. Our eyes turn and it is Marty saluting us with an upraised fist. The other hand holds a yellow government-issue plastic litterbag. A chorus of cheers commences, for we all know what's in the bag. The heart and the liver of a bull elk.

"Fresh meat in camp," shouts Tommy. Marty wearily stalks up the 23
slope to our caucus site. He sets his big frame on the log. He looks tired, and before he speaks he takes an offered cigarette. Another round of the flasks before we get down to the bloody details.

"It wasn't a half an hour after I left you guys. The snow was so damn 24
crunchy that rather than walking slow and quiet, I just bulled through the stuff for a while, and then I'd sit real quiet until I got cold.

"So I was sitting looking across this meadow at this badger. The little 25
sucker was playing in the snow, trying to get over this log. Hell, I must of watched him for 20 minutes. Finally I got cold, so I get up and start rolling up my sleeping pad that I'm sitting on. I see something out of the corner of my eye. I turn my head and there is the big bull elk standing right in the middle of the meadow. I just about shit. I reach down for my rifle, raise, aim, and fire. He goes down."

"But I heard four shots," interrupted Tim. 26

"Yeah. I shot him three more times. He was laying there flopping 27
around. It was making me sick. I couldn't stand it."

"He was probably dead. It was just reflexes," says Steve, who knows 28
all about that kind of stuff.

"Shit, I don't know. I just couldn't stand it. So, anyway, it's time to gut 29
it. God, I cut him open from bow to stern. I never seen such a big paunch. It was huge. The gut pile must be three feet high."



My paunch, still well attached, gets a bit queasy by the details. But 30
dammit, I think, this is what being a carnivore is all about. The story and
backslapping ceases and we start our long trek back to the rig.

That night in camp, all of us with Marty's wife, Catherine, ate heart, 31
liver, and gonads for dinner. Some of us passed on the "oysters," since
there were only two to go around. Since there wasn't enough ketchup in
camp (or the county for that matter), I passed on the liver as well. I con-
centrated on the heart, while Steve waxed eloquent about the ventricle
and aorta.

Around the fire in the teepee, Marty explains the gutting in even 32
more detail. "Shit, I never gutted anything before. Seen and read about it
a bit. After it finally stops flailing around, I roll it over as best I can and
pull my knife. I slit its belly from prick to neck. Out comes that *huge*
paunch. I thought it would never end."

There it goes with the paunch stuff again. 33

"So I get that out. But I knew you had to cut its throat to disconnect 34
the heart and lungs from the windpipe. I cut out the heart and liver and
set them aside. I know you have to be careful about the bladder, but I
had a hard time finding it. Finally I get all the stuff detached. I tried to
maneuver him for a better position, but he's so damn heavy. I didn't

want the meat to get tainted, so I must of washed the chest cavity out with snow about six times."

"Christ, it will be shining," says Jim. 35

"Did you have any trouble skinning it?" asks Steve. 36

"Skin it," says Marty. "I was supposed to skin it there? Oh shit, I hope I didn't blow it." 37

"No big deal," assured our resident anatomist. "It's just that tomorrow morning the whole thing will be frozen solid. Tough skinning is all. In warmer weather, you should skin right away to make sure the meat cools properly." 38

More eating, drinking and finally sleep. 39

It was up at the crack of midmorning for the big pack out. Marty managed to slew the beast in the wilderness as far from a road as possible. We loaded pack frames, lunches and beer into Tim's father's 1954 Willys four wheel drive station wagon and drove to the nearest road's end. It was two steep downhill miles to the kill. 40

We are in excellent spirits on the way down. All seven of us headed out choosing to discuss the lovely day rather than the torturous loads we would carry on the way out. Steve carried the lone rifle in case we saw something else. 41

It was indeed a glorious day. A few clouds drifted by to the northeast. The snow was powdery and knee-deep as we headed down the slope. We were soon all strung out, with Marty leading and I bringing up the rear. No chance of getting lost, since I have six sets of tracks to choose from. 42

I am not looking forward to the quartering and boning. I actually prefer to think of the killer pack. But, I reason, it's only right to have blood on your hands if it's going to be in your mouth. 43

My thoughts turn to my youth and my first big kill. Hunting was serious business in my family. My mother wasn't keen on it, but I grew up mainly on venison and elk supplied by my father. If not wild game, it was mostly beef or chicken for dinner. My grandmother shot her last deer when she was in her seventh decade. Before I carried a gun at 13, I always clamored to accompany my father on his hunting trips. 44

With a rifle in hand, however, I was confronted with the stark reality. Yes, the goal was to shoot that very beautiful and very living mule deer. After that, one had to gut it, skin it, cut and wrap it, and of course eat it. I always was grossed out when I had to assist in the family gutting. Up to your armpits in hot, still living guts, blood, hair, and other indescribable tissues and liquids. 45

But what really bothered me was the killing. Put the defenseless animal in the sights and blast it to death with a .30 caliber bullet. Would I have the "guts" to do it? It bothered me greatly, since I could detect no such reluctance from my fellow hunters and role models. 46

Due to fortunate circumstances for me and the deer, I never had to confront my cowardice for the first two seasons. My reluctant cowardice 47

was two-fold. The inability to shoot the animal and the fear of telling my father of my fears.

In my 15th year, I came up with what I thought was the perfect solution: I'd just shoot and miss. Embarrassing, but face-saving. Rather a bad shot than a pansy. Then I'd phase myself slowly out of the hunting religion.

However, it didn't work out as planned. About 20 miles south of where I now stand on the bank of the North Fork of the Malheur River is Antelope Mountain. My father and I had dropped off some fellow hunters and were driving the rig around to meet them on a "stand." Stands are great. You can sit against a tree and pretend to be seriously looking for the mere movement of a deer. I usually contemplated more serious matters, such as the jigsaw pattern of ponderosa pine bark or my budding sexuality. Come to think of it, I still think a lot about sex on the stand.

We are cruising along and a forked horn buck runs across the road. My father hits the brakes and looks over to me and says to go it. I jump out and run behind the vehicle. Although I intend to shoot to miss, I nonetheless am very excited. I raise my Remington 760 "Gamemaster" and peer through the 3 to 9 power variable scope.

The primeval instinct took over. The prey was trying to escape me, the predator. Kill! Kill! I had the blood lust. I squeezed the trigger. Nothing happened. Forgot to release the safety catch. I squeeze again. I feel the recoil, but don't hear anything. I focus again. The buck turns and looks toward me and drops to the ground. It's still moving. I shoot (unnecessarily) again. It doesn't move anymore. We run up to it. I stand staring with both pride and revulsion. My first shot was right out of the textbook. Right through the shoulder. The second, however, was a gut shot. Very messy. As a result, my father gutted it to make sure the meat didn't get tainted. Fortunately, I missed my full immersion baptism in guts.

The deed done, I placed my duly authorized State of Oregon deer tag number 144328 on the animal. We carted it to the rig and drove off. The magpies already eyeing the gut pile. Later my grandfather mounted the tiny antlers, and they hang still as a reminder in my front room.

The canyon narrows, and it's necessary to cross the stream several times. I hear voices and know I'm near the kill. I sit to rest, out of sight of the others.

That didn't end my hunting. It took a more spiritual experience while hunting chuckars on the east side of Steens Mountain. The following Christmas vacation was a time to slew this exotic Asian bird. The chuckar is fair eating if you shoot enough. The little devils were tough hunting, since they always flew uphill. I am again walking along with my father, this time on foot through the sagebrush. The old man notices that I'm not into it and proceeds to chew me out.

So I take the long route back to camp. I sit down on a big boulder 55 covered with orange lichen and have a talk with myself. It was a beautiful day. The Alvord Desert, a barren alkali flat to the east, framed cloud shadows on its white canvas with ease. The sun was warm, the air cool and crisp.

But I was just pissed. Mad at my father, mad at myself, and mad at 56 the world. Just then a jackrabbit hopped by, and I simply blasted it with my .20 gauge double-barreled shotgun. Both barrels. For no other reason than I was pissed off. The rabbit was just in the wrong place at the wrong moment. I walked over to it, kicked it over and then started crying.

Oh well, I can't avoid it any longer. I walked around the bend in the 57 creek with my comrades in the meadow. They were rolling up their sleeves. We discussed the task. Steve assumed the unspoken command, since he was the anatomical fanatic. He directed work crews top and bottom.

Catherine built a fire, more for atmosphere rather than any needed 58 heat value. We named him Herman. I quickly volunteer to be the sawyer. Less chance of touching blood and flesh, I figured.

There was a short silence where I and, I suspect, the others said a 59 short prayer of thanks in our own religion for Herman's sacrifice. I am standing over this recently living elk. Its rich golden brown fur coat hides a third of a ton of blood and guts and brains and brawn. "Let's go," someone said softly.

I was directed to saw off the horns. Tommy held while I hacked first 60 through hair then skull and then brain. My stomach was slightly queasy. Not too bad, though, since Herman was stone cold dead. I sawed incorrectly, and the rack of antlers broke in two.

Soon the hide was off. As we cut and hacked, Herman gradually 61 turned from a once-living being to pieces of meat. Tommy stripped off the meat from the ribs. Tim, Marty, and Steve wrestled with the massive hindquarters. Then the front quarters. Jim cut at various parts, more like a surgeon than a butcher. Catherine shuttled between creek and fire, washing and bagging meat.

Finally, it is all cut up. The sun is getting a bit low in the southwest- 62 ern sky. Herman isn't Herman anymore. It's just piles and piles of meat, bones, hide and, oh yes, let us not forget, guts. As I stare at the bare rib cage, I realize why it got progressively easier for me to handle the meat as we went along. It wasn't that I got used to it in the sense of becoming callous to it, but rather that the animal turned progressively from a once-living being to simply cuts of meat. With some Styrofoam and cellophane and some rose-colored glasses, we could be at Safeway.

But we aren't. We are two miles down in this deep canyon and it is 63 getting dark. To a chorus of groans, we lift our 100-pound packs. One step at a time. No problem. Just take it easy. As we trudge up the snow slippery slope, the rest stops become more frequent. Each step is becom-

ing a serious chore. Damn this pack aches. I am relishing each brief rest and every flat spot in the trail is a brief paradise.

I suggest that Steve pass that gun around so we may take turns holding it on each other, so we may force each other up the hill. The sun is down now and it's getting cold, but the pouring sweat insulates me well. Left foot, right foot. Ah, the last stretch. I hear the others. By their boisterous yells, I know they are at the Willys. Someone touches off a rifle shot in a one-gun salute.

Reading Closely

1. What is Kerr's thesis? List the assertions he makes to support his thesis.
2. **Together with a classmate**, list all the examples and anecdotes the author provides to support each of his assertions. Discuss your list to determine which examples do and don't work successfully to advance the argument.
3. What specific information in this essay surprised you? Did any of the information alarm you?

Considering Larger Issues

1. Kerr's essay first appeared on his pro-conservation Web site. Who reads such Web sites? Who might comprise the reading audience of this particular essay? Who might Kerr have been considering as his audience when he wrote this essay? Describe them.
2. What is Kerr's purpose for this essay, particularly in terms of a potential audience? What specific passages support your answer?
3. What is your reaction to the following passage?

Where in hell do you think meat comes from? Not the goddamn supermarket all neatly sliced on Styrofoam and encased in cellophane. No, it comes from living animals who *died* by human hands to bring it to you. Now, if you haven't got the gonads to do it, that's one thing, but don't give me shit for taking direct responsibility for it.

What is the basis for your reaction? Be prepared to share it with the rest of the class.

4. **COMBINING METHODS.** In order to advance his argument, Kerr uses *narration*. Mark the passages that display narrative elements—setting, characters, dialogue, sequence of events, and so on—and explain their effect on the overall essay.
5. How does the visual on p. 677 enhance or complement Kerr's argument? Be prepared to share your answer with the rest of the class.

Thinking about Language

1. **With another student**, use the context of the essay or your dictionary to define the following words and phrases. Be prepared to share your definitions with the rest of the class.

high-powered weapon (1)	suppressed (8)	paunch (29)
old growth (1)	negligees (16)	queasy (30)
hardy (2)	Copenhagen (17)	slew (40)
bivouac (3)	"sippin' whiskey" (17)	torturous (41)
sojourn (4)	full tavern (22)	strung out (42)
pending (6)	stalks (23)	clamored (44)

2. What words, phrases, or passages suggest and develop the metaphor of hunting as a kind of war? How does this war metaphor enhance Kerr's attitude toward his subject in this essay? What additional phrases, passages, and examples develop and extend this attitude?
3. What specific descriptive details does Kerr include to create images of members of his hunting party? What words or phrases help create a positive, negative, or neutral overall image of each member?

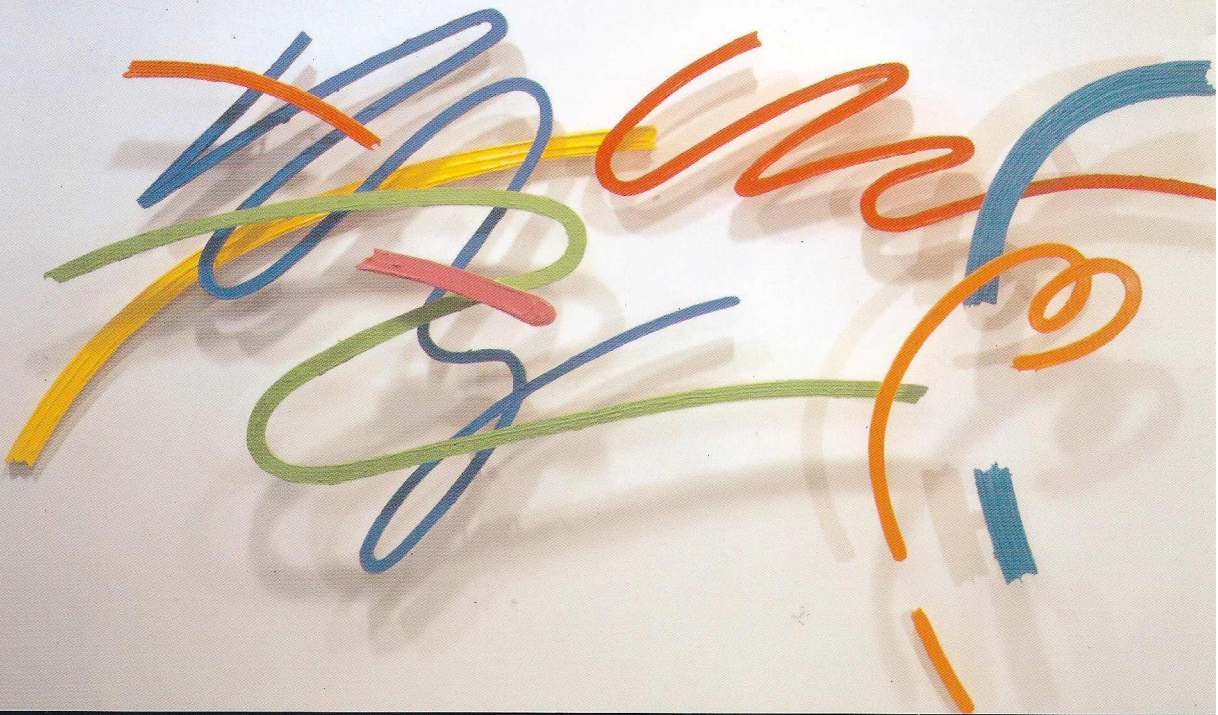
Writing Your Own Arguments

1. **With one or two classmates**, research material for a three- to four-page essay in response to Kerr's argument, either agreeing that meat eaters should experience killing their own meat or arguing that there's no logical reason they should do so. You may decide to divide up the research in various ways, such as according to which side each of you supports. Possible supporting or opposing information could be government limits on slaughter and hunting, health and safety regulations for slaughter houses and hunting, the levels of expertise necessary for successful hunting and butchering, and so on. You may find yourselves relying on comparison and contrast analysis or on an in-depth look at one method of meat preparation in particular. Depending on the extent to which your group agrees and the preferences of your instructor, you might then write individual essays or a group, coauthored essay. Remember to use the guidelines for checking over an argument on p. 652.
2. Whether you're a carnivore, vegetarian, hunter, or grocery-store shopper, you might be offended by Kerr's essay. Draft a two- to three-page argumentative essay that defends your eating habits or method of procuring food. Use as much specific information and support for your thesis as possible, and refer to the guidelines for checking over an argument on p. 652.

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“Yeah . . . , maybe the shots were Tommy. Heard one shot, followed by three in rapid succession.”

We chat on quietly waiting for the others. Soon, Tommy shows up. Just as Nordic as Tim and a half-foot shorter, Tommy skips up to us with a big shit-eatin' grin on his face. No blood on his hands either. He *always* has that shit-eatin' grin. We repeat our earlier chat, this time not quite as

quietly. Tommy throws in lewd and obscene comments at every available opportunity. He's the horniest man in Oregon and makes no pretenses about it. Rumor has it that he has a closet full of negligees in all colors and sizes for whomever may be at his cabin. It is further rumored that he has a complete set of diaphragms ("You look like about a 48") in case his woman friend didn't bring hers.

The flask passes again and our conversation is at a near normal level. 17
Out of the corner of my eye, I see another walking body. We turn to see a lanky, tall man of 24 who acts a rightful 30, lumbering toward us with his rifle strung over his shoulder. A large pinch of Copenhagen serves to give the effect of a fat lip. No blood on his hands either. Again, we repeat our tales to Steve, who adds a few of his own. Our talk is now at a roar and is liberally aided by Steve's George Dickel "sippin' whiskey."

"Who the hell fired those shots?" roared Steve. "I thought it was you," 18
as he points with his whiskey bottle to Tommy.

"I wish," grins Tommy. 19

"Our only hope is Marty. And where is Jim?" says Tim. 20

"We'll find him on the way out," I offered. 21

The conversation is now at a full tavern roar. We finally hear a wild 22
whoop down by the creek. Our eyes turn and it is Marty saluting us with an upraised fist. The other hand holds a yellow government-issue plastic litterbag. A chorus of cheers commences, for we all know what's in the bag. The heart and the liver of a bull elk.

"Fresh meat in camp," shouts Tommy. Marty wearily stalks up the 23
slope to our caucus site. He sets his big frame on the log. He looks tired, and before he speaks he takes an offered cigarette. Another round of the flasks before we get down to the bloody details.

"It wasn't a half an hour after I left you guys. The snow was so damn 24
crunchy that rather than walking slow and quiet, I just bulled through the stuff for a while, and then I'd sit real quiet until I got cold.

"So I was sitting looking across this meadow at this badger. The little 25
sucker was playing in the snow, trying to get over this log. Hell, I must of watched him for 20 minutes. Finally I got cold, so I get up and start rolling up my sleeping pad that I'm sitting on. I see something out of the corner of my eye. I turn my head and there is the big bull elk standing right in the middle of the meadow. I just about shit. I reach down for my rifle, raise, aim, and fire. He goes down."

"But I heard four shots," interrupted Tim. 26

"Yeah. I shot him three more times. He was laying there flopping 27
around. It was making me sick. I couldn't stand it."

"He was probably dead. It was just reflexes," says Steve, who knows 28
all about that kind of stuff.

"Shit, I don't know. I just couldn't stand it. So, anyway, it's time to gut 29
it. God, I cut him open from bow to stern. I never seen such a big paunch. It was huge. The gut pile must be three feet high."



My paunch, still well attached, gets a bit queasy by the details. But 30
dammit, I think, this is what being a carnivore is all about. The story and
backslapping ceases and we start our long trek back to the rig.

That night in camp, all of us with Marty's wife, Catherine, ate heart, 31
liver, and gonads for dinner. Some of us passed on the "oysters," since
there were only two to go around. Since there wasn't enough ketchup in
camp (or the county for that matter), I passed on the liver as well. I con-
centrated on the heart, while Steve waxed eloquent about the ventricle
and aorta.

Around the fire in the teepee, Marty explains the gutting in even 32
more detail. "Shit, I never gutted anything before. Seen and read about it
a bit. After it finally stops flailing around, I roll it over as best I can and
pull my knife. I slit its belly from prick to neck. Out comes that *huge*
paunch. I thought it would never end."

There it goes with the paunch stuff again. 33

"So I get that out. But I knew you had to cut its throat to disconnect 34
the heart and lungs from the windpipe. I cut out the heart and liver and
set them aside. I know you have to be careful about the bladder, but I
had a hard time finding it. Finally I get all the stuff detached. I tried to
maneuver him for a better position, but he's so damn heavy. I didn't

want the meat to get tainted, so I must of washed the chest cavity out with snow about six times."

"Christ, it will be shining," says Jim. 35

"Did you have any trouble skinning it?" asks Steve. 36

"Skin it," says Marty. "I was supposed to skin it there? Oh shit, I hope I didn't blow it." 37

"No big deal," assured our resident anatomist. "It's just that tomorrow morning the whole thing will be frozen solid. Tough skinning is all. In warmer weather, you should skin right away to make sure the meat cools properly." 38

More eating, drinking and finally sleep. 39

It was up at the crack of midmorning for the big pack out. Marty managed to slew the beast in the wilderness as far from a road as possible. We loaded pack frames, lunches and beer into Tim's father's 1954 Willys four wheel drive station wagon and drove to the nearest road's end. It was two steep downhill miles to the kill. 40

We are in excellent spirits on the way down. All seven of us headed out choosing to discuss the lovely day rather than the torturous loads we would carry on the way out. Steve carried the lone rifle in case we saw something else. 41

It was indeed a glorious day. A few clouds drifted by to the northeast. The snow was powdery and knee-deep as we headed down the slope. We were soon all strung out, with Marty leading and I bringing up the rear. No chance of getting lost, since I have six sets of tracks to choose from. 42

I am not looking forward to the quartering and boning. I actually prefer to think of the killer pack. But, I reason, it's only right to have blood on your hands if it's going to be in your mouth. 43

My thoughts turn to my youth and my first big kill. Hunting was serious business in my family. My mother wasn't keen on it, but I grew up mainly on venison and elk supplied by my father. If not wild game, it was mostly beef or chicken for dinner. My grandmother shot her last deer when she was in her seventh decade. Before I carried a gun at 13, I always clamored to accompany my father on his hunting trips. 44

With a rifle in hand, however, I was confronted with the stark reality. Yes, the goal was to shoot that very beautiful and very living mule deer. After that, one had to gut it, skin it, cut and wrap it, and of course eat it. I always was grossed out when I had to assist in the family gutting. Up to your armpits in hot, still living guts, blood, hair, and other indescribable tissues and liquids. 45

But what really bothered me was the killing. Put the defenseless animal in the sights and blast it to death with a .30 caliber bullet. Would I have the "guts" to do it? It bothered me greatly, since I could detect no such reluctance from my fellow hunters and role models. 46

Due to fortunate circumstances for me and the deer, I never had to confront my cowardice for the first two seasons. My reluctant cowardice 47

was two-fold. The inability to shoot the animal and the fear of telling my father of my fears.

In my 15th year, I came up with what I thought was the perfect solution: I'd just shoot and miss. Embarrassing, but face-saving. Rather a bad shot than a pansy. Then I'd phase myself slowly out of the hunting religion.

However, it didn't work out as planned. About 20 miles south of where I now stand on the bank of the North Fork of the Malheur River is Antelope Mountain. My father and I had dropped off some fellow hunters and were driving the rig around to meet them on a "stand." Stands are great. You can sit against a tree and pretend to be seriously looking for the mere movement of a deer. I usually contemplated more serious matters, such as the jigsaw pattern of ponderosa pine bark or my budding sexuality. Come to think of it, I still think a lot about sex on the stand.

We are cruising along and a forked horn buck runs across the road. My father hits the brakes and looks over to me and says to go it. I jump out and run behind the vehicle. Although I intend to shoot to miss, I nonetheless am very excited. I raise my Remington 760 "Gamemaster" and peer through the 3 to 9 power variable scope.

The primeval instinct took over. The prey was trying to escape me, the predator. Kill! Kill! I had the blood lust. I squeezed the trigger. Nothing happened. Forgot to release the safety catch. I squeeze again. I feel the recoil, but don't hear anything. I focus again. The buck turns and looks toward me and drops to the ground. It's still moving. I shoot (unnecessarily) again. It doesn't move anymore. We run up to it. I stand staring with both pride and revulsion. My first shot was right out of the textbook. Right through the shoulder. The second, however, was a gut shot. Very messy. As a result, my father gutted it to make sure the meat didn't get tainted. Fortunately, I missed my full immersion baptism in guts.

The deed done, I placed my duly authorized State of Oregon deer tag number 144328 on the animal. We carted it to the rig and drove off. The magpies already eyeing the gut pile. Later my grandfather mounted the tiny antlers, and they hang still as a reminder in my front room.

The canyon narrows, and it's necessary to cross the stream several times. I hear voices and know I'm near the kill. I sit to rest, out of sight of the others.

That didn't end my hunting. It took a more spiritual experience while hunting chuckars on the east side of Steens Mountain. The following Christmas vacation was a time to slew this exotic Asian bird. The chuckar is fair eating if you shoot enough. The little devils were tough hunting, since they always flew uphill. I am again walking along with my father, this time on foot through the sagebrush. The old man notices that I'm not into it and proceeds to chew me out.

So I take the long route back to camp. I sit down on a big boulder 55 covered with orange lichen and have a talk with myself. It was a beautiful day. The Alvord Desert, a barren alkali flat to the east, framed cloud shadows on its white canvas with ease. The sun was warm, the air cool and crisp.

But I was just pissed. Mad at my father, mad at myself, and mad at 56 the world. Just then a jackrabbit hopped by, and I simply blasted it with my .20 gauge double-barreled shotgun. Both barrels. For no other reason than I was pissed off. The rabbit was just in the wrong place at the wrong moment. I walked over to it, kicked it over and then started crying.

Oh well, I can't avoid it any longer. I walked around the bend in the 57 creek with my comrades in the meadow. They were rolling up their sleeves. We discussed the task. Steve assumed the unspoken command, since he was the anatomical fanatic. He directed work crews top and bottom.

Catherine built a fire, more for atmosphere rather than any needed 58 heat value. We named him Herman. I quickly volunteer to be the sawyer. Less chance of touching blood and flesh, I figured.

There was a short silence where I and, I suspect, the others said a 59 short prayer of thanks in our own religion for Herman's sacrifice. I am standing over this recently living elk. Its rich golden brown fur coat hides a third of a ton of blood and guts and brains and brawn. "Let's go," someone said softly.

I was directed to saw off the horns. Tommy held while I hacked first 60 through hair then skull and then brain. My stomach was slightly queasy. Not too bad, though, since Herman was stone cold dead. I sawed incorrectly, and the rack of antlers broke in two.

Soon the hide was off. As we cut and hacked, Herman gradually 61 turned from a once-living being to pieces of meat. Tommy stripped off the meat from the ribs. Tim, Marty, and Steve wrestled with the massive hindquarters. Then the front quarters. Jim cut at various parts, more like a surgeon than a butcher. Catherine shuttled between creek and fire, washing and bagging meat.

Finally, it is all cut up. The sun is getting a bit low in the southwest- 62 ern sky. Herman isn't Herman anymore. It's just piles and piles of meat, bones, hide and, oh yes, let us not forget, guts. As I stare at the bare rib cage, I realize why it got progressively easier for me to handle the meat as we went along. It wasn't that I got used to it in the sense of becoming callous to it, but rather that the animal turned progressively from a once-living being to simply cuts of meat. With some Styrofoam and cellophane and some rose-colored glasses, we could be at Safeway.

But we aren't. We are two miles down in this deep canyon and it is 63 getting dark. To a chorus of groans, we lift our 100-pound packs. One step at a time. No problem. Just take it easy. As we trudge up the snow slippery slope, the rest stops become more frequent. Each step is becom-

ing a serious chore. Damn this pack aches. I am relishing each brief rest and every flat spot in the trail is a brief paradise.

I suggest that Steve pass that gun around so we may take turns 64 holding it on each other, so we may force each other up the hill. The sun is down now and it's getting cold, but the pouring sweat insulates me well. Left foot, right foot. Ah, the last stretch. I hear the others. By their boisterous yells, I know they are at the Willys. Someone touches off a rifle shot in a one-gun salute.

Reading Closely

1. What is Kerr's thesis? List the assertions he makes to support his thesis.
2. **Together with a classmate**, list all the examples and anecdotes the author provides to support each of his assertions. Discuss your list to determine which examples do and don't work successfully to advance the argument.
3. What specific information in this essay surprised you? Did any of the information alarm you?

Considering Larger Issues

1. Kerr's essay first appeared on his pro-conservation Web site. Who reads such Web sites? Who might comprise the reading audience of this particular essay? Who might Kerr have been considering as his audience when he wrote this essay? Describe them.
2. What is Kerr's purpose for this essay, particularly in terms of a potential audience? What specific passages support your answer?
3. What is your reaction to the following passage?

Where in hell do you think meat comes from? Not the goddamn supermarket all neatly sliced on Styrofoam and encased in cellophane. No, it comes from living animals who *died* by human hands to bring it to you. Now, if you haven't got the gonads to do it, that's one thing, but don't give me shit for taking direct responsibility for it.

What is the basis for your reaction? Be prepared to share it with the rest of the class.

4. **COMBINING METHODS.** In order to advance his argument, Kerr uses *narration*. Mark the passages that display narrative elements—setting, characters, dialogue, sequence of events, and so on—and explain their effect on the overall essay.
5. How does the visual on p. 677 enhance or complement Kerr's argument? Be prepared to share your answer with the rest of the class.

Thinking about Language

1. **With another student**, use the context of the essay or your dictionary to define the following words and phrases. Be prepared to share your definitions with the rest of the class.

high-powered weapon (1)	suppressed (8)	paunch (29)
old growth (1)	negligees (16)	queasy (30)
hardy (2)	Copenhagen (17)	slew (40)
bivouac (3)	"sippin' whiskey" (17)	torturous (41)
sojourn (4)	full tavern (22)	strung out (42)
pending (6)	stalks (23)	clamored (44)

2. What words, phrases, or passages suggest and develop the metaphor of hunting as a kind of war? How does this war metaphor enhance Kerr's attitude toward his subject in this essay? What additional phrases, passages, and examples develop and extend this attitude?
3. What specific descriptive details does Kerr include to create images of members of his hunting party? What words or phrases help create a positive, negative, or neutral overall image of each member?

Writing Your Own Arguments

1. **With one or two classmates**, research material for a three- to four-page essay in response to Kerr's argument, either agreeing that meat eaters should experience killing their own meat or arguing that there's no logical reason they should do so. You may decide to divide up the research in various ways, such as according to which side each of you supports. Possible supporting or opposing information could be government limits on slaughter and hunting, health and safety regulations for slaughter houses and hunting, the levels of expertise necessary for successful hunting and butchering, and so on. You may find yourselves relying on comparison and contrast analysis or on an in-depth look at one method of meat preparation in particular. Depending on the extent to which your group agrees and the preferences of your instructor, you might then write individual essays or a group, coauthored essay. Remember to use the guidelines for checking over an argument on p. 652.
2. Whether you're a carnivore, vegetarian, hunter, or grocery-store shopper, you might be offended by Kerr's essay. Draft a two- to three-page argumentative essay that defends your eating habits or method of procuring food. Use as much specific information and support for your thesis as possible, and refer to the guidelines for checking over an argument on p. 652.