

The Best of Friends, vol. 1

ANTHOLOGY OF NEW QUAKER WRITING
PUBLISHED 1999 BY KIMO PRESS IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE
FELLOWSHIP OF QUAKERS IN THE ARTS

My Grandma Knew What She Was Doing

Helen Weaver Horn

Your war is packaged neatly
as a pre-cut chicken-select
facts stacked under headlines,
pale as breasts in plastic wrap-
but Grandma set me straight.

When I was ten she yanked
the biggest Leghorn from the coop.
She made me hold her squawking
on the maple stump
and chopped her head off.
Blood gushed hotly on my hand,
her feet clawed air, her limpness
quivered. I felt sick to death.

But Grandma made me hold her
upside down and dip her
in the boiling pot, pluck out
her feathers, split her open.
There inside, her eggs lay
forming. There her heart
was knotted down. I had to
tear them out, her lungs,
intestines-save the liver-
rinse and cut her up, prying
my knife between her joints
so like my own two knees.

I had to dry and salt and flour
each piece and fry them
in the spitting iron skillet.
Pile them on the heated platter.
Bring them in to Grandpa
at the dinner table. Eat.

The Best of Friends, vol. 1

ANTHOLOGY OF NEW QUAKER WRITING
PUBLISHED 1999 BY KIMO PRESS IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE
FELLOWSHIP OF QUAKERS IN THE ARTS

My grandma knew what she was doing.
Never, never will I see
a packaged chicken blind again.

Or buy your Grade A federally-
inspected bloodless war.

Copyright © by Helen Weaver Horn. All rights reserved.