



Opossum (Big Bear Zoo)

Joan Colby

Opossum

Eyes chambered as bullets,
Crouched over the barncats'
Kibble. Naked prehensile tail.
Here are some facts:
Bifurcated penis or vagina.
Pouch for the young.
Immune to pit vipers.
Omniverous. Solitary. Edible
If you are hungry enough.

When threatened, an involuntary
Collapse. Slobbered grimace,
Foul smell of the death
It impersonates. Stiff with a
Rigor mortis

I'm not fearsome enough
To engender.

Looks at me. Face of
A ratlike monk whose prayer
Is: Fill this good bowl
Daily for I have come.

Joan Colby has published widely in journals such as *Poetry*, *The Spoon River Poetry Review*, *New York Quarterly*, *the new renaissance*, *Grand Street*, *Epoch* and *Prairie Schooner*. She has received numerous awards and has published a number of books, including *The Lonely Hearts Killers*, *How the Sky Begins to Fall*, *The Atrocity Book*, *Dead Horses*, *Selected Poems* and *Properties of Matter*. Two chapbooks are forthcoming in 2014.