

**We Have Come to the End of the Oyster Months**

All that time, I was briny and bivalve  
for you. Through winter I traded the sea  
  
for your mouth, roiled in your landlocked hands, fed  
  
you raw, left my armor glistening, tossed  
off in gutters or turned into the earth  
  
of your garden. I made every shallow  
  
place a bed for you to gather my pale  
iridescence, my fine ridges, body  
  
curved as a comma or teardrop, filling  
  
your whole palm. I gave you my delicate,  
brackish bones. You dredged me rough from the reef,  
  
alive, morsel of flesh plump with clear blood,  
  
crisp as snow on your tongue. All those brief, dark  
days, I promised cucumber, melon, bright  
  
liquid summer, never felt the heavy  
  
gloves you wore to dull my scrape, to soften  
my sharp frame, never troubled when you slipped  
  
that short, stout blade against my hinge, the twist,  
  
the pop, the knife sliding up to sever  
the muscle that held me closed, never cared  
  
when too much force would strip a red sliver  
  
from your connoisseur's finger, never guessed  
your disgust when you first tasted my murk,  
  
when the bay could not stay cold and I turned

lush, exuberant, protandric, clouding  
the water, spawning millions of others

I might be. How you contracted then, shut

tight, left me to spoil in this heat, this meat  
still rich and mineral, swimming in juice

that once summoned tides, that once summoned you.