

What is left of the body

after Bob Hicok

My thumb kept in a crystal case beside the empty
bronze that used to keep my head both in a niche
along the nave to help church-goers remember me
never crumbling though the skin has leathered
and I try to practice blessing every day and give
the afterlife another try. The thumb was parted
from my body an afterthought I believe. No one
knows why *thumb* not me and not you, just like
why *God* why *stars* why *fruit on the trees to be grasped*
by the hand and plucked, but it must mean something
so they parted it from me, and there it is
the knobbled knuckle and overgrown nail of death
poised as if mid benediction. It's a shame my thumb
couldn't multiply like fish to tuck inside the tender
pocket of each visitor's palm, to be brought
to every dwelling that lacks a blessing thumb
but only one is left, the hinge of all
the rest of my arm, all my prayers floated up
to God now gone and even an abundance
of thumbs wouldn't be enough to slake the wants
of those who carry home their scraps of me
their medals and prayers cards to our lady of succor
each worshipper an infant cleaving to its mom, tugging
and prodding and lifting her thumb to its maw.

Glossary (Eat)

A guide to words transformed through the erasure of "Decreation", a work by Simone Weil originally published in her posthumous collection, *Gravity and Grace*.

Appearance	A creature's external shell, as beheld by other creatures. Some creatures have a pear shape, some an apple, some a starfruit; all shapes are said to be good.
Begging	What the creature must sometimes do to ensure it will eat. For example, <i>I beseech you, lay me an egg</i> .
Creator	The thing that made the creature. It has no need to eat or perhaps eats everything indirectly, through the creature's eating.
Creature	A being thrust into existing. Which now, to maintain its being, must find ways to eat.
Death	The ceasing to be of the creature; possible result of its failure to beg for eggs.
Moreover	Conjunctive adverb meaning "Also and more importantly." For example, <i>The creature likes Oreos because of the extensive variety of available flavours. Moreover, these cookies are vegan</i> .
Pierce	A possible cause of the creature's death. For instance, if struck through the gut with an arrow while sitting unawares at a picnic table eating shoofly pie, the creature might die.
Protection	What the creature craves: a garden empty of predators, abundant with plum and persimmon. But the Creator knows luxury is conducive to inner rot; the creature must pursue new forms of nourishment lest it strip bare the berry bush and languish, deficient in some nutrient that grows beyond the garden wall.
Shame	The emotion of the creature, whose natural diet consists of vegetation, about its occasional longing for ham.
Stimulus	The spark that shocks us into striving.
Uncreated	Not death but erasure of the creature's entire existence. Cannot be achieved through mere failure to eat but through an unfurling through time of the creature's being and the subsequent dissolution of that being (which material has been studied extensively but not identified) and scattering through the cosmos.
Withdraws	What the creator does after loosing its creation, raw and unlearned, upon the wild earth, to observe from its favourite remote constellation.

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Selections from *Catherine and Simone*

Wretchedness Etched in the finest filaments of the creature's being, a fear that it will never, ever be full.