

Sunny Side Up

BYRON CASE

It is ovoid simplicity incarnate,
perfectly palm-sized,
and crackable.
beyond that, though, most people
have no idea about eggs,
the right way to cook one
sunny side up.
There's butter involved, you know,
and time.

Impatients fry them too hot
till the edges crisp and brown
and the yellow yolk goes
firm on bottom or, worse yet,
the albumen arrives at your table
half raw and mucousy.
Both occur with
the same alarming frequency as does
that other, whiter stuff
on your sandwich
when you told the waitress mayonnaise.

My friend almost killed me
in a single-car rollover.
We untangled ourselves from the wreckage
to stare in the dark at the damage.
With adrenaline idiocy he
giggled that my last words
would've been a deadpan "Well, shit."

You'd laugh too, if you knew.
And because the casseroles at wakes
prove food and death a match,
my friend treated me to Denny's.
(This was after the ER.)

Fake wood under mugs
of scorched Folgers and these
plates of caramel-ringed eggs.
It's early, still dark. No one
acts like they mind the food,
just keep picking, staring off
into the middle distance as if
it's all the same to them,
dying to get the day started.