

Adapting in Ethiopia

by [Mary M. Brown](#) in the [October 29, 2014](#) issue

They warned us, like innocents, not to name
our goat, to exercise good sense, refuse
to see him as a pet or even, *oops*,
as *him*. Just do whatever all it takes to tame
the thing toward that appointed time when goat
and fate should meet, when the dull drawn blade
would withdraw blood from funny, fuzzy throat.

For days or weeks, we avoided eyes, made
it a point to see the animal as meat.
Through open window, so relieved, I heard
you say to our neighbor, “No, you do it.”

And kindly, our neighbor did—spared you,
and me too. But I will never forgive
myself the rare deliciousness of the stew.