

Why do they make boys out of meat?
Whenever I sit down to eat
They say, 'Sit up. Don't swing your feet.
You'll spill that milk. Now have some meat.'

I say, 'I've heard cupcakes taste good
With marmalade; I'll bet they would.'
They say, 'You know that's much too sweet
For growing boys. Here; take some meat.'

I say, 'Or some cream puffs with these
Dill pickles—would you pass that, please?'
They say, 'Just sit down in that seat
And drop those cookies. Eat that meat!'

I say, 'Ice cream with nuts would do;
But no candy—not till I'm through.'
They jump up; they all stamp their feet:
'No! NO!! You need your meat, Meat, MEAT!!!'

'Sweet stuff makes you grow weak and fat—
You're not built out of things like that.
A growing boy's made out of meat;
Meat's the one thing all boys must eat.'

What makes them think I can't grow strong
Except with meat? They must be wrong:
Why, right now I feel weak and sick
To see my plate get piled up thick

With meat, Meat, MEAT. I'd tell them so;
They'd say, 'Get straight to bed, then,' though;
'Bed's where all sick boys belong.'
All the same, though, I know they're wrong.

A growing cow finds all he needs
To get strong eating grass and weeds.
I'll say, 'Please help yourself and pass
The weeds. Here; have some nice, fresh grass.'

Horses don't eat their meat at all;
They grow up strong and fast and tall.
Sometime try feeding meat to one—
You'll see how fast horses can run!

Just take one look at elephants:
They never eat *their* meat—not once.
If I ate peanuts till I got
That big, I'd show them what was what!

Why, they've been mixed up, all along;
Meat isn't how to grow up strong.
Just think of all the ones that do
Eat meat—think what they grow into:

Frogs eat their bugs up—each last bit;
They don't get big or strong from it.
Cats eat their mice—raw mice at that!
I'm bigger *now* than any cat.

And what if boys *are* made of meat:
We don't turn into what we eat—
It turns to us! Each cow I've seen
Ate grass; not one of them was green.

Our cat eats birds—she's got no wings;
Those birds don't help her when she sings!
Mice don't look like cheese and what's
More, squirrels don't look much like nuts.

Then, what if they were right? If we
Ate beefsteak just think what we'd be!
Next time they say, 'Beef's good for you,'
I'll swish my tail up and say, 'Moo!' Insert comma

They say, 'Eat meat so you'll grow big.'
I'll say, 'I thought you said, "Don't be a pig!"'
Or when we've got pork for a meal
I'll just roll in the mud and squeal.

The way they pile meat on my dish,
Why, I could grow scales like a fish,
Horns like a sheep, feet like a hen—
I guess they'd all feel sorry then!

Still, here's what they should feel afraid of:
If we should eat just what we're made of
And growing boys are made of meat—
People are what we'd ought to eat!

Maybe they're right; maybe I'm wrong;
I'll eat my meat and grow up strong
Like good lions or good tigers do—
They won't keep *me* locked in some zoo:

I'd prowled down the main street of town
To see if any meat's around;
All the folks I'd meet I'd say,
'My, but you *do* look good today!'

Wouldn't they pat me on the head
And rub my ears while they all said,
'Good boy! You're so big and well-fed;
That's enough meat—try cake instead.'

I'd sniff them over; then I'd roar,
'No sweet stuff! Meat! I want more! MORE!!
Just meat, Meat, MEAT!!! A man-sized steak!
I need some for this stomach-ache!'

I'd eat my meat up till I grew
So big that they'd see who was who;
They'd never say, 'Please just get finished';
They'd say, 'I like you small and thinnish;

'Why not just dawdle?' since they knew
They'd all be gone if I got through.
I'd eat it all up 'till I'd grown
So whopping, I'd be left alone.

Alone?—just wait now. That could be
Some trouble. Who'd look after me?
Where would I go, then, to get food?
Who'd fix it for me?—no one would!

And who'd fuss at me to get done?
Eating *that* much meat's no darn fun!
I may let meat folks stick around
Just till some better setup's found—

Till the great Topsy Turvy comes
And his voice booms like ten bass drums:
'Let everything around here change;
Let everything be good and strange.

'Kittens will chase big dogs up trees;
Flowers will chase the bumblebees;
Foxes will run from hens and hide;
Rocks will catch cold and come inside;

'Mothers will just love lots of noise;
Fathers will smile at naughty boys;
Grandparents will act strict and mean;
Nothing will be the way it's been.

'And boys? We'll make boys from mince pies—
That ought to grow boys the right size;
We'll make boys out of gum and candy—
That ought to build boys brisk and dandy;

'We'll make boys out of plum preserves
To build strong muscles and quick nerves;
We'll make boys out of cakes and tarts
To give them rich blood and stout hearts;

'Make them from popcorn, pecans, pickles,
Jams, jelly, crackerjack, Popsicles,
Ice cream with toppings sweet and sour;
We'll make those boys just bulge with power!'

Then, then, when I sit down to eat
They'll say, 'Slide down in your seat;
Don't sit so tall! Please swing your feet'.
And don't just sit there looking sweet!

You finish all that candy! Stop X;
Don't eat that meat! Now drink your pop!

Change to
period
and
semicolon

The Boy Made of Meat

THE BOY
MADE OF MEAT

a poem by W. D. SNODGRASS

with wood engravings by GILLIAN TYLER

William B. Ewert, *Publisher*

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for ~~Russ~~
Russell Bruce

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