

Flayed

by Stephen Measure

The first cut is worst—
no the second—
no the third.

No, they all are worst;
yes, they all are agony—

until they aren't,
for was not this expected?

Such knives, what purpose do they have but to cut?

Such skin, what purpose does it have but to be removed?

And then it is done,
my flayed skin held up for the world to see.

But I rise from the table,
blood and tendons,
muscles and will.

I rise from the table.

I stand beside my flayed skin.

And everyone can see, and everyone can know: I have never been more free.