

The Butcher Shop

My mother sent me
on the all-American errand.
She needed a pound
of ground beef
for a hamburger meal
typical of my youth.

I had to stand on my tiptoes
to see over the white counter
and place my order.

The butcher put the chunks
of beef through
the silver grinder two times
carefully kneading
the strings of red meat
before weighing
the lump on the scale
and wrapping
in heavy brown paper.

He came around
to collect my fistful of money
after wiping his hands
on his bloody apron.

I took the package
and left
the butcher shop
and its carcasses.

Now I don't have that
Chore on my list anymore.

