

## *Cast Irony*

Who scrubbed this iron skillet  
In water, with surfactant soap,  
Meant to cleanse, not kill it,

But since its black and lustrous skin  
Despoiled of its enrobing oils,  
Dulled, lets water in,

Now it is vulnerable and porous  
As a hero stripped of his arms  
Before a scornful chorus.

It lacks  
Internal consistency  
As ancient oral epics

Where a bronze-age warrior might appeal  
To a boar's-tusk-helmet wearing foe  
Who has an anachronistic heart of steel,

Wills of iron—from which metals  
No one has yet forged a weapon,  
Much less pans or kettles

(Though there must have been between  
Two eras, awkward overlap  
Enacted in the kitchen

When mother-in-law and daughter  
Wrangled over the new-fangled,  
Over oil and water

In proverbial mistrust,  
Brazen youth subject to iron age  
As iron is to rust.)

There can be no reasoning  
With sarcastic oxygen,  
Only a re-seasoning

Can give the vessel's life new lease:  
Scour off the scab the color of dried blood,  
Apply some elbow grease

To make it fast;  
Anoint it, put it once more in the fire  
Where everything is cast.

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