

## **Esoterica**

My mother's friend cut open  
snakes to read the future,  
an ancient divination ritual,  
haruspicy. Everyone tells  
me I've seen some weird shit. I  
don't disagree. After she sliced  
open the snake, the friend smiled  
and asked, What have we here?  
before launching into a prophesy  
of rocky love affairs, secrets concealed  
so long only the body remembers.  
I never learned to read the entrails,  
but I know what the inside of a snake  
looks like, a dead one, the kind some  
people call the only good one.

*Michelle Brooks*

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