

FREDERICK SMOCK

*For Simon P\_\_\_\_\_.*

Barrel-chested butcher boy from Bristol.  
Self-described literary philistine,  
who yet quotes Eliot and Betjeman liberally....  
We walked down along the Thames—Isis, as you know it  
here in Botley—narrow, densely boated with mallards  
this far north, before it widens and flattens out  
toward London. A simple meat-carver  
(and you have the arms to prove it), now a vicar,  
unlike any vicar ever parodied by Monty Python.  
Your talk of God is robust—more, always more!—  
meaty, veined, full of blood and spleen,  
a deity as real as, well, a rump roast.  
There is a lot of talk in the Bible about eating.  
That's some of the best parts, you say.