

Animal Purpose

Not by Extraordinary Means

There is so much material in the material world.

We have no yard; the philodendron pots are small; we'll bury the cat elsewhere.

The Vikings were precise but not extraordinary

in their cruelties. King Ælla's ribs were broken from his spine, then pulled open behind his back to resemble wings.

Little brown bats are vanishing

like smoke from caves they've filled for thousands of years. It is a small thing, but if you don't add eggs one at a time to cake batter, the emulsion will break, and the cake won't rise.

The Vikings—sometimes they yanked the lungs through.

Salted them.

No, not by extraordinary means, my mother told the doctor when pressed. He wouldn't let her leave for the night. Then, in her smallest voice, *But, yes, everything else, please.*