

Fifteen, a boy's body, Tristan taught  
Mark's huntsmen the ceremony of the hart.

*Excoriaton*: lip to belly, legs fore  
and hind, slicing gently not to tear  
as hide cleaves to tensing flesh until  
flesh lies naked to his knife; pull  
forequarters from breast, breast from chine  
and flank, hindquarters as one, all lain  
on the hide; his hands still so clean  
his eager students rip out the guts.

*Fourchée*: liver, pizzle, testicles and net  
bound with green bast to a green fork.

*Quarry*: free the pluck, quarter the heart's  
lower half, detach milt and lungs, separate  
the head; what's left goes to the poor;  
milt, lungs, guts and heart's quarters  
fed chopped to the hounds out of courtesy.  
To trumpets his dismembered parts proceed  
to court in polite mockery: antlers first,  
then limbs, ribs, quarry all led by the breast;  
at last, above these, high over their music  
bobs and wavers the green forked stick.