

# I'm Dying

by Ligi

I'm dying and this lady is asking me  
for sausage. "I need  
a quarter pound of sweet," she says,  
"and half a pound of hot."

her son, I guess it's her son,  
keeps fingering the ricotta  
in the cooler. he's already picked his nose  
and rubbed his finger on the glass.  
I think she feeds him only eggs  
he smells so bad. he keeps on screaming:  
"mama, mama, come look  
at the funny man."

"I'm dying," I tell her.  
"the weather's been pretty hot,"  
she says. the line has stretched around  
the shop and clear around the corner. "hmmm,"  
she keeps saying, "hmmm" and "hmmm."

a cop shoots a black man  
carrying two cases of dog food  
and a portable radio  
through a broken window across the street.

I hear the boy squeal as an old man  
tries to twist his ear off.  
others say: "did you see that?"  
"did you see that?"

I cough and when I do  
the blood begins to spill  
from my lips. "I'm dying," I say  
and get the lady's sausage.  
"oh, give me half a pound of cheese."  
the man with her son's ear between his fingers says  
"listen, bag, the poor kid's dying  
and ain't none of us got all day."

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