

ROBIN CHAPMAN

Cosmology Cooking

—on reading *It Must Be Beautiful:
Great Equations of Modern Science*,
edited by Graham Farmelo

So here I am chopping onions
for the pork loin roast, wondering
if wine, rosemary, and garlic
will be enough seasoning, and
thinking on Planck's equation,
 $E=hf$, that Einstein saw
meant light and matter were quanta,
inherent graininess in our universe,
just the way a good cook dices or chops
each ingredient to a uniform size suited
to a succulent outcome in the same
cooking time with the roast,
when I think I see: those tiny precise
Planck constants that followed
are just the size of our birthing universe—
unit mass, the all of our beginning;
unit length, our initial size;
unit time, a measure of that first
expansive pulse—Big Bang quanta—
from which it follows (slicing
the leeks, rings within rings)
that other universes
may exist with different starting seeds
and physics, a totally different spectrum
of electromagnetic waves,
sizes of matter, and times—each
a recipe—till I'm recalled to the matter
at hand by the sizzle of pork fat
in the roasting pan. Tucking it into the oven,
I set the timer for an hour and a half,
time to ponder multiple worlds
bubbling up and evaporating
with what's left of the cooking wine.

—from *One Hundred White Pelicans*, by Robin Chapman