This most famous speech from Shakespeare's Scottish play has inspired many a grimace and generations of Halloween chants, but few have noted that it reads much like a recipe. The directions to "boil," "bake," and "bubble;" the indications of the time of night to harvest the "slips of yew;" the specificity of the various parts to be added to the "poisoned entrails"—filet, toe, wing, and tongue—all resemble instructions seen in recipes throughout this exhibition. Really, given the range of ingredients found in seventeenth-century medicine, it is not until the third section and the inclusion of human body parts that the recipe becomes otherworldly, gruesome, and menacing.

"For a Charm of Powerful Trouble"

Then the charm is firm and good.
Cool it with baboon's blood.

For the incense of our cauldron
Add the dragon's tooth and shed
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat and slips of yew
Slivered in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-delivered by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab.

Adde thereto a tiger's chaudron
For the ingredience of our cauldron.

Cool it with a baboon's blood.