

Fall 1975

## Piano Piece for Bar Exercises

Nance Van Winckel

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

### Recommended Citation

Van Winckel, Nance (1975) "Piano Piece for Bar Exercises," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 5 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss5/3>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in CutBank by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

**PIANO PIECE FOR BAR EXERCISES**

*For my sister, Sarah*

The blood you left on the piano keys had dried.  
Webs and dust lay heavy on the dull flat strings.  
Winter beats closer than death at my temples,  
pounding its same black note to the walls again.  
And this morning I could feel once more the sharp  
jerk of the room, watched as the pedals jumped,  
and with one hand resting on the chair's straight back  
my fingers twisted around the cool black bar,  
the arc of my foot holds tight against my knee.

In the grey light I watch now as a shadow  
bends itself backward, the arm's thin stretch  
leading it down, then the quick crash of your feet  
on the pedals and somewhere women begin  
moaning and the window shakes and I see  
the shadow unfurl itself across the walls,  
the easy split and crack of such unsure bones  
and the sounds of the women are screams now  
and the screams and the music are one smooth chord  
until the final fall of the shadow,  
until the white keys drip red to your feet;  
the music fading to its own liquid stillness.  
But the women with their constant screams are strong,  
are pulling open our faces and moving in.