

# CutBank

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## Directive

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## DIRECTIVE

Her lair: landscape of dark wood  
in a ragged season. At night animal eye  
and baying of wolf make her brave. Owls glide  
to their kill. Near the river's swollen tongue  
moss caves keep her warm. She sees children  
bathing in pools. They eat the air. They remain.  
Their shrill play lets the hounds loose  
under the roar of timber crackling to the ground.  
In cellar-holes she finds their abandoned toys.  
Head out-of-mind she hears the din  
of skillet and spoon. Once upon a time.

She frowns on the shadow of a thorn,  
gazes at steel-bright water in the pool—  
mirrors of coolness. Coolness of spoons.  
With her deep-sea hands she fingers  
a stone. It is a bell sharpening  
the song of dancing children.

“Water,” she whispers. “Water on stones.  
I am hanged by the roots of my hair.”  
What nimble terror of play—shadows  
carved from bone. And it is too  
far to hear the singing.