

# CutBank

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## Three Poems

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## THE LANTERNS

Up the wind's sleeve, one bird.  
Down my collar  
The thrill of something padding  
On an empty stomach,  
Out of earshot,  
So lean a shape it could make bed  
In a crosshairs' horizontal.

Under the shoulderblade  
Of the grist mill,  
The creek  
Runs its faulty wiring, sparks  
Fish and foam  
At the heel  
Of the wheelbite.

Just enough current gets through.  
The light in the flour  
Comes on, a mote-sift  
Wattage  
Dusting the air,

Those lanterns by which  
The poor see  
The nothing there is  
To eat, stacked  
Double, piled five deep  
In the twelve-shelf pantry.

## THE DIVER'S BUBBLES

A stone cares nothing for the breathless  
Passages, the diarists of the inner life.  
For all along, it has been  
A constant diving  
Into itself, deeper  
Than what a hand picks up in the road.

And this, which the fist tendrils around?  
The soul's scoria, a bad eye  
Or testicle jettisoned  
That its grayness be lightfooted,  
Its journey, pure gyre.

How deep must a stone go?  
Here on the path shoulder, in  
Shin-high weed, the little  
Diver's bubbles  
Rise, will not break.  
See how much they themselves  
Resemble stones?

With that much confusion above  
On the earth,  
You too would go  
Spelunking into your own darkest  
Corners,  
Shedding all remembrances  
Of self,  
Wanting, in a stone's case,  
To prove  
How hardness  
Picked clean

Is air, is fire, is water.

## AFTER YEARS OF CAREFUL INDIFFERENCE

I am still interested in my skin.  
Good it has stayed  
This long  
Like a revival tent sewn tight around  
An evening of dubious  
Miracles.

I am passed about inside there,  
A fedora  
In whose shallow crown  
The days collect like tooth fillings,  
A pocket knife  
Digging at a knuckle wart  
Between hymns.

What is mind  
But a row of knees over which  
A hat shadow passes, a  
Wheelchair battery  
Whose charge is the sum  
Of bruises got by running against  
The edge's of one's  
Redoubtable name?

I am still interested in my skin  
And dream of the balcony  
Where I will be shaken out  
Like a blanket of cracker crumbs,  
The lap  
On which I'll be stitched  
With a field of thirteen stars. . .

My wounds, my beautiful colonies  
Slipping back  
Into the sea.