

# CutBank

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## Two Poems

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## **BY THE TEETH OF MY SKIN**

The dog shakes and sneezes  
for sharp joy of the air,  
barks and that bark  
strikes the hill like a hoof  
leaving the moon's faint print: O

to shake the skin  
right off me! It is close  
and smooth from doing all the things I do  
and stipples at the merest nudge of cold,  
drawing close to hide in stuff  
white as a cabbage foot.

While blowing like a field in his fur  
the dog snoozes or pounces on the light  
or rolls and scatters himself among the leaves,  
then yawns and takes the sun  
upon a thousand points of fire,

while my blind skin  
fugitive from a mine  
and salt with the wisdom of the cave  
tests the air with a rutabaga fear  
of tusk and tooth:

We fit each other too well, my skin and I.  
We are myself and so unlike the dog  
I can't leap out of it without a thought.

## ALL THE KING'S HORSES

The wall goes all around our garden.  
Kleenex flowers quietly  
on the grass. It is Monday,  
a day content to be.

Unlike Sunday, when with nicker and crash  
squadrons of women  
men and children come  
to put us together again.

Sitting still we stare  
through the colored paper words  
of these damp philosophers,  
professors of the bored,

whose focus fails us until  
we climb the green oak tree  
where it bends to the top of the wall  
where we can just see

below the blood-flecked horses  
drag through the town  
something armless and headless  
bouncing up and down,

then look down on our garden  
as God made it the first day of the week  
with time folding green hands, waiting  
breathless for our shriek.