

CutBank

Volume 1
Issue 8 *CutBank* 8

Article 16

Spring 1977

Smith River

Mary Ruefle

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

Ruefle, Mary (1977) "Smith River," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 8 , Article 16.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss8/16>

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.

SMITH RIVER

They say the Smith
is the slickest damn river
down county.
Put a pint in your right boot
and it will break upstream.
Or if your left foot happens
to be smaller
try it that way
but don't count on it.
I am told this river
is all riled up inside and I
have come from Bent Mountain
with this commotion in place of my heart
and no intention of fishing.
I have spent whole
blocks of time studying Brueghel's
Big Fish Eating Little Fish, where
someone with a sharp tool
has spent hours slitting bellies,
one right inside of another.
Don't think I don't know
the rewards of shutting my books.
If I didn't
I wouldn't be here in the first place.
I've already waded across
without twisting an ankle.
But I know what they mean.
All the drunks on the other side
are lugging huge Chinese bracelets:
loads of little silver fish
dangling on poles.