

Spring 1977

When the Phone Rings at Night

Tom Rea

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

Rea, Tom (1977) "When the Phone Rings at Night," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 8 , Article 26.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss8/26>

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.

WHEN THE PHONE RINGS AT NIGHT

birds settle blackly on the line outside
and listen in: sly chirps
behind the words a friend is drunk
it's three AM, bars closed, and what
am I doing? Dazed,
my wife says "geese in the fall", her arm
becoming fact on the bedclothes,
her shoulders rolling.

Out there something waits for shape
something in the night like cat fur
rises to the brush of a hand.

The birds get louder. I'd tell him
don't talk, we're tapped, but he might
come over. Rivers run between us
fast under a thin ice-glaze. The ice
could crack, he'd drown, and who'd
be guilty? Air hisses on the line.
My wife shifts. The birds
have flown off bored, but if the night
had wings or arms it would soften
at their cries, and open, open.