

CutBank

Volume 1
Issue 9 *CutBank* 9

Article 15

Fall 1977

Two Poems

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Recommended Citation

Eastman, Jon (1977) "Two Poems," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 9 , Article 15.

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THE LANDSCAPE NEAR A RESTHOME

The long afternoon wanes.
The color-bruised sky,
loose in its frame,
shifts across farm fields.
Again today Grandmother rests,
her thin lids close at last.
She knows how long there is
to breathe the evening air.
Grandfather gambles in her dream,
whiskey-brown hands pushing everything across.

If only she could have seen
how different today has been—
black trees holding their limbs
in phosphorescent green,
blood tulips limp, deepening
in shadows stretched across lawns.
She speaks and her breath drifts in the warm air.
A gold eye appears in a cloud.
Waking, she sees its rays enter her room,
like showers beginning over coal-black fields.

MEMORY OF A SKELETON

*Chicago—The skeletons
of a man and a woman,
wearing winter clothing,
were found in a luxury car
parked in a garage on the South Side.*

In the moment your hair
came through exhaust I was
red like the whole garage,
tail light red that locks
a stare—say the first time I stood
changing a tire on the freeway
I held my finger up to see
that red come through—then
your face drifted down angelic.

This was no dream:
my fur coat warm as blood
and you getting in beside me,
sending that tremor through
my legs, so good it made me open
for more air. You asked
what's wrong but there was nothing;
I had only been waiting too long.
You asked again
slower, your lips sanguine,
eyes gone liquid. Just then
it must have been the best.

Oh your skin fell away like petals
in the long winter. I missed
the music of
the car and your careless voice.
When they finally came, letting in
that white blast of light,

they were years late, they
found us laughing forever,
our heads thrown back
against the cushioned seat.