

# CutBank

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Volume 1  
Issue 10 *CutBank 10*

Article 5

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Spring 1978

## Two Poems

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### Recommended Citation

Kuffel, Frances M. (1978) "Two Poems," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 10 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss10/5>

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## THERE ARE NO MASTERPIECES

in Manning, South Dakota.  
Only Norwegian boys singing  
in schoolyards  
& this year's Polish refugee  
behind her cousin's lace curtains  
waiting for the ice cream man.  
Sunday, & I follow the tracks  
that yawn toward Dry Wall,  
strong lines of rust  
on prairies. I lay 10 pennies  
on the rails; pick them,  
flat & faceless, from the gravel.

The 20th week Jimmie is gone  
he writes: "I am seeing the world.  
My life was one long sleep. I was dying  
in it." The boy the recruiters got to  
first, writes me poems  
of water & Mexican whores.  
I want to read them  
to strangers on the street.

In Manning, South Dakota  
we have one buffalo, the hills here—  
black only by night. Girls follow  
boys to ball games. My sister  
is marrying a sailor. I will sign  
this later, as always.

## KADDISH FOR A DEAD CHILD

You sing this song  
one more time  
for wild animals stalled  
in the alley, waiting,  
baying at trees. Night lights  
fall to their shoulders,  
a tiger moans with a star  
lodged in his back.

September and I wear red again.  
The nights are back.  
You rush in from full moons  
a wolf from the fire.  
We count each moon.  
Like how many pears  
from the tree, loaves  
on the rack? Hills march  
across the night,  
their luminous dark pillows.

Four mornings in a row you wake  
at seven. You sail the bed  
through chairs and tables.  
Your bear is under the bed.  
Pick it up. Put it away.  
Fold your days against your nights.

Gone are funeral weeds for tigers.  
They kill deer at my door.  
Always a fist of invitations.  
Birthday parties, a hay ride.  
White flowing into red,  
There ought to be jungles  
for people like us.