

CutBank

Volume 1
Issue 11 *CutBank 11*

Article 24

Fall 1978

Natural History

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Recommended Citation

Sheck, Laurie (1978) "Natural History," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 11 , Article 24.

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NATURAL HISTORY

Lighted, the domed roof.
Inside, in the dark,
how quiet the hallways must be,
and the animals, their heads
bowed, or they're shyly
eyeing each other.
Some drink from their

reflections, the reflected
leaves shiver out of reach.
Will they ever be released
from their bodies?
Here are the birds

that cannot fly,
and here the woodchuck
forever half-in, half-out
of the ground.
You could see their complaints
in their eyes
if their eyes were not glass.
This is their dignity.
This is how secrets

survive us somewhere else.
Six eggs in a nest,
six tight fists.
The snake that wants
to eat them but will not;
its body arched
in eternal hunger,

how safe not to get
what you want: the sky
so flat it won't
shimmer near the moon,
the pond so still
no fish will break its surface.