

# CutBank

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## Keeping

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## KEEPING

Of course there's largesse. I'm not denying the air in this ratty black jazz club blossoms: invisible, sure, but there's actual hothouse jasmine from the sax, and a stoop-gait lube-hipped riff-riding guy in back is holding his clarinet between sets like a prom kid just walking out from the florist's: and then he blows, he blows: great duotone orchids, long low ditchside flowers, a single blue camellia. What I focus on, though, is the trumpet, its golden rose. And this: long after the last tapped key has its one amber after-drop wiped, and the overlapped rings of the stein-bottoms on the countertop are lost to a cloth: a glisten of spit is still on the trumpet. Save it. A kind of juice from the stem.

I know, there's bounty enough most days so storage seems superfluous gesture: pigeons with the chests of opera divas, strutting for crusts; the gaudy drag-dancer fans on the peacocks; hemstitch kiwis; the blue in the bird of paradise lit like lapis lazuli, the blue in the parakeet that of the nursery curtains; owl-stare; cockatoo-spectrum. Here, a flock of crows taking off, slow and superciliously, a black shrug. And one feather, a comma, landing. Keep it. Press it, punctuation too large for its book.

Okay, the seed in the seed so any peach on the plate is a cornucopia, sort of. Sure, the cosmos. Right, those limitless cities of prairie dogs. When I was a child I walked the canyons the milliner's aisles were: batiste, and Irish lace, and jonquil-patterned linen, bolts of it big as cathedral organpipes, felt and burlap, velvet, organdy, corduroy, tearose silk and gauze.

And a back room for scraps the size of my hand.  
Or, here: just a knuckle of cloth, just a thumbnail,  
that and a frayed half-yard of yarn. You'll want  
to take it with.

And if you won't I will.

Frugality's child, I'll place it all on this  
page—against the day of its being  
needed, against the dark and the long dump down.  
Black feather, motley bits  
from the seamstress's tatter-basket, stickum  
gobbet of spit—I'll make  
a doll of you from it, in  
perpetuity, make a  
doll of you from it, doll of you  
from it, in case.