

CutBank

Volume 1
Issue 18 *CutBank 18*

Article 4

Spring 1982

Proportionate

Paul Shuttleworth

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

Shuttleworth, Paul (1982) "Proportionate," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 18 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss18/4>

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.

PROPORTIONATE

Drying my boots
by the propane heater,
why do I think of
a cellar I feared
when I was a boy?
Nothing frightening
ever happened there,
and my only memory
of the house is
a babysitter who
I thought would let
her boy have her
on our couch.

* * *

I stepped over the barbed wire fence
after checking for game in corn stubble.
I was going to sit on the grass
by a locust tree, but I thought
I heard a pheasant gurgle.
The woods along the creek seemed unused
and grey, haunted by something
I won't live long enough to see.
Soon, the house was in view:
the kind of place where the woman
curses the laundry as it freezes
on a wire clothesline.

* * *

The wind has been blowing in
from the south since morning,
and it might snow tonight:
Magritte said, "I despise
my own past and that of others."
I look at my boots, nearly dry
and ready for oiling, and wonder
how many more times can I do this.
The next time will be as this time,
done already and ready to be done
once more, yet the ecstasy
of chilled feet near a heater
always seems new, virginal.