

Fall 1984

The Way Down

Suzanne Paola

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

Paola, Suzanne (1984) "The Way Down," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 23 , Article 35.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss23/35>

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.

The Way Down

St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York 1982

Spring breaks like a fever over its cold and clammy face. Everything that could have risen is gone. And still the spires, daggers of the Church, hang restlessly from the sky. A tired shopper rests, cradling her bags, on the steps. A bum sleeping in the doorway turns and clutches his paper bag of whiskey. His death, which will come later as spring fades like a vaudeville act and dissolves to winter, will be as luminous and without sense as the light rain falling on his frigid skin, so that the shopper stumbling over him will think, for a minute, of something frightening, before thinking that he's merely in the way.

There's so much that must be accounted for: the blind and the dumb thronging the streets, the pale serpent sleeping in the chancellery. And the walls, the white that isn't white but an assault on its opposite, on darkness, on everything that can't be seen, dark heart, dark stone, the enemy silently collecting in the cracks and the corners and the vague half-moons of the spires, drenching the stone in its solitude, lighting the way down.