

Fall 1986

Castling

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Recommended Citation

Silesky, Barry (1986) "Castling," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 25 , Article 21.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss25/21>

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Castling

So whose story is it anyway? Which one
 holds the glass of whiskey while someone else dreams
 another night, twists a damp hankie
 and a withered leaf of wandering jew stares
 back at the next blank morning?

I want to
 erase the part that stuck in the middle,
 the unnamed animal escaped from the zoo
 whose invidious breath seeped into dinner,
 and suddenly I didn't understand

how we got here
 and the city's lights blinked off one by one
 like secret weapons in someone else's hands.
 Now I just want to start over, without any memory
 of those greasy clots mining the kitchen.

Here,
 let's take a walk in the bright afternoon, really,
 I like your story, that elegant gesture
 of hand, the way you touch something I can't
 explain and won't leave me alone . . .

but it's bitter
 cold, sun glaring down the razored air,
 and both of us frozen with what we can't take
 back. Still, I told you once, I don't give up
 easily; it costs too much to get here—

castling,
 you called it, this trading back and forth,
 hands, places, all right, I'm still playing . . .