

# CutBank

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## Grandmother

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## *Grandmother*

You died.  
eighty-seven  
it's understandable  
12 years past your husband  
15 years past your son  
my child nights often  
burned with your pleas  
to join them.  
Your ice fingers  
look carved  
a snow queen,  
lips slashed in a red  
you'd never wear in life.  
You gripped fire in times before,  
witch fingers twitched  
like twigs,  
raw with energy.  
The spirits danced  
at your beckoning  
old woman,  
the wind breaking branches  
and singeing the moon  
was a truer funeral dirge  
than organed hymns.  
In the end not even you  
could beat down death  
no whispered words  
or sharp toned songs  
could turn him away.  
He claimed his price  
and left your cold thin husk  
for me.  
A thousand lives ago  
you tempted innocence,  
bled boys into men  
this life you hid  
in grey hair and print dresses,  
denying prophecy and reverence  
a goddess in a laundromat  
palming yourself off as human,

masquerading as a grandmother  
you never fooled me  
not for a moment  
your eyes were traitors,  
whispered antiquities  
of buried races, tracings of lovers  
sucked dry and covered by centuries  
as you strode towards the future  
with pained determination  
garbed in blood and bone.