

CutBank

Volume 1
Issue 29 *CutBank* 29/30

Article 12

Fall 1987

Ubi Leones

Patricia Goedicke

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

Goedicke, Patricia (1987) "Ubi Leones," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 29 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss29/12>

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.

Ubi Leones

They are where they always are. Prowling.
 Behind shuddering baseboards low growls,
 Waves of them, the soft pad of feet
 Stalking the borders that stand between us
 And all that is not us. But we watch;
 We will not let them in.

We keep lying to ourselves,
 "No, there's nothing important out there,"
 The gust of song that blurts from an open window
 And then stops, suddenly, stumbling over our quarrels,
 Cruel words, insults, that time I made you weep

No, I will not pursue it!
 That would be to be swept right off the charts
 On all fours, in bleak deserts howling
 And rolling my head, with wide open jaws
 Terrified by the shapes of all I have done
 And not done:

Rather than face them down
 In their own kingdom, let us go out and buy barbed wire,
 Bombs, helicopters, Kalashnikovs; anything to keep the barbarians at bay,
 As long as they keep sending us kisses
 And cheap clothing, as long as they keep us warm, vital, in touch

At a safe distance from the drums throbbing
 Out there at the edge of the world, if it's not rage
 Rising up against us, knives in the hands of children,
 It's the obscenity of a finger: whatever we try to put down
 Mushrooms itself overnight

Because they are still there, the lions,
 Those monarchs we have loved secretly, always,
 In cramped zoos they pace behind dingy bars
 By day only; on long nights they roam the windy savannahs
 Restless as cars, in the streets we hear them calling,
 For we may not escape them, in the darkening mind's disorder
 There are no frontiers to pain,

Even the toughest membrane
Cannot hold out against it; in quiet living rooms behind curtains
The sarcasm mounts, in the rubble of ruined cities
Like snipers from broken windows, with snarls not just for our enemies
But whatever interferes with us, suddenly
The tongue slips, or the trigger finger

And there they are, in a great cloud,
A gold floating of manes
Over the tall superhighways and the tollbooths
Secretly the shadow passes, so high in the sky
The ache of it cannot be stopped, in the red champ of rage

The forms we see are our own;
From grim treetops, sleek muscular shapes leaping
That cannot be turned back, as the houses of our lives fall down
Pain is the only password; as the maps disappear,
As the colors of all countries fade
And bleed across rivers, in the jungle that surrounds us all

They are launching themselves already
In broad daylight, hurling themselves down
On someone we know, on the paralyzed piece of flesh looking up
From the ground below us, at the end of the bloody race
The last thing most of us see will be the white sun
Exploding beneath us, the agonized dazzle of terror frozen
On a friend's face.

Patricia Goedicke