

CutBank

Volume 1
Issue 29 *CutBank* 29/30

Article 17

Fall 1987

Phone Rings

Chad Perry

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

Perry, Chad (1987) "Phone Rings," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 29 , Article 17.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss29/17>

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.

Phone Rings

The first ring is a small voice
lost in low currents
the phone generates.
The voice would just say it is sorry.

The second has a tone
of a friend across town
whom I see every Christmas at a dinner.
Every year, we drink the same bad wine
and smile.

But the third takes me from bad
tastes in my mouth and brings me
to Lincoln, Nebraska, to my fool
brother who has a new idea
as scattered as crows in a strong wind.
I see his wings stretched out,
clinging to his idea as if it were air.

And the fourth becomes the crow's voice
that makes me look up and wonder,
that one, single bark from a black leaf.

By mid-point of the fifth,
each ring is a mantra, same syllable
connecting beginnings.

Endings are for the sixth.
There is my brother's wife.
A bulletin from a radio
in her thin voice. I listen:
The catch in brother's breath
made him call out in sleep.
He barely clings to anything.

The seventh sounds urgent.
I move toward the phone, hands cold.
Then I realize I am late for
something. On the way out, an ear,
pressed to the other receiver,
wades through miles of glass wires,
waiting, waiting for my small
hello.

Chad Perry