

CutBank

Volume 1
Issue 39 *CutBank* 39

Article 27

Winter 1993

Genesis

Tod Marshall

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

Marshall, Tod (1993) "Genesis," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 39 , Article 27.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss39/27>

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.

Tod Marshall

Genesis

Every summer a farmer rolled the hay,
created those fat piles we climbed on, leaped
between, and even hollowed out to allow ourselves
that little cave where we clustered close
around a stolen magazine we'd snatched
from the corner store, unseen, and near-
sprinted the whole way back, a delicious
and forbidden pornographic delight.

We dared one another to touch
our engorged penises to the flesh
of those glossy pages and we did it
all knowing how your brother, soon
to become a Marine, would have bruised
our shoulders, how our fathers,
if they could have stayed sober
for an entire afternoon, would have
beaten our bodies senseless, our mothers yelling,
then crying in some other room.

And of course, they all got the opportunity
and more, when your older sister discovered
our touching each other without any hope
of release, our too-young bodies swollen
with desire, so gorgeous in that harvested hay,
mist of late summer heat, her hand held
by the man who drove the tractor
through these fields, the one rumored

to have shot a dog for nothing other
than happiness, its tongue lolling as it ran
across the just-cut fields. When she pulled back
the thrown-away blanket, our cover to that cavern
of hay, she was hoping to uncover a place
where she and he could twine together
amidst that smell, that threatless odor
of life and rot, of winter food for graceful horses
and lazy cows, that smell so full
and fertile, a natural aphrodisiac. We knew
what they were there for and threatened to tell
as we ran away, out of the field, and back
to our houses, with half-unsnapped pants. Yes,
we were kids, and yes, she told anyway, our crime
eclipsing her little trespass, the reportage probably worth
extra hours out on the town, cramped
in a rusted pick-up. I didn't see you
for a week and when I did the yellow-brown
explained a deeper purple, a belt buckle or fist,
screams, your burly father gloating with his hand
hard against your throat. And then, just another
week later, you moved, taking your older brother,
that sister, far away, and I was never given the chance
to say these words, constricted by the mute agony
of childhood fear: to say that no, my hands failed
to malform, curl up with some awful disease, and no,
my eyes didn't rot, drop out like discarded
marbles. And finally, no, I did not renounce the act,
even after my father made me swear to never think
like a faggot again. I guess he got his way. I turned
out, in the end, normal as they say, and yet,

even if our caresses came not from love
or any ultimate desire for each other or truth,
but only the vigorous furnace of youth, finger-
like flames of curiosity and touch, the beauty
of an act beyond any bruise, beyond any after-
church curses from spittle-spraying pastors, beyond
any school-yard teasing from ruthless peers: a beauty
that burns and endures. I will not
remember the curved bodies of the women
who decorated those pages in a blur of flesh.
I will not remember the face of that man
curled in anger and disgust. I will not
remember your sister, that vicious
bitch who called me a queer then threw
a bottle from a truck window to scare me
away from the curb. We were only eleven
and I may not even remember your name, only
the sweet scent of hay, that luscious first touch
of another upon my body, an entrance
into heaven, then the pulling back of a cloth,
the pouring in of cutting judgment, that flash,
an exalted cleaver heaved up on high by strained
muscles, dropped in a reckless explosion
of clarity, vision, of vicious white light.