

# CutBank

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Volume 1  
Issue 40 *CutBank* 40

Article 28

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Spring 1993

## The Ani

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### Recommended Citation

Pape, Greg (1993) "The Ani," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 40 , Article 28.

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Greg Pape

## *The Ani*

October, November, December, I've forgotten  
the month, but I remember the moment  
I first saw the Ani

perched on the limb of a young tree  
planted in the divider strip of a parking lot  
in South Florida, North Miami, Bay Vista

where they used to dump toxic waste  
in the mangroves, then paved it over  
and built a university. I worked there

two years. The limb was so slight  
and the Ani so heavy it bobbed  
up and down in the breeze.

Clouds loomed above the sea.  
Tar-black and shining in the sun,  
its big grotesque beak

in profile, it looked straight at me  
with one eye glinting like a black pearl.  
I am the Lord God of this exact place  
it said. Who are you?