

Winter 1994

The Documentary We Were Making

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Recommended Citation

Tate, James (1994) "The Documentary We Were Making," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 41 , Article 27.

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The children ate battered fish wedges
and then started to swim around
a kind of island which turned out to be
the Dowager Empress of China.
Several of them were spitting up
and turned pale and soon faded from view
rendering the study incomplete and fathomless.
No one was even allowed to speak their names
for more than a thousand years.
And then one fine morning the Dowager herself,
sipping tea, recalled those cockamamie days,
and it made her smile to see those battered
fish wedges again, barely able to swim,
and yet surprisingly fit and handsome.
They were ready to talk about what history
had misunderstood, how some of those
little folk had turned out much better
than anyone could have expected, establishing
the Dixon Ticonderoga pencil factory
in 1388 or some such year, and going on
to become deans of industry and raising
enormous families in the remote Pacific wilderness.
A pencil wrote all this down on its own.
It followed her everywhere for days and
it never stopped taking notes.

One day when she was very old
she walked to the edge of her balcony
and bit the head off of a passing butterfly.
A lost tribe woke under a picnic table,
indicating that a sequel was still possible.