

# CutBank

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## Oracle

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Gerald Stern

## Oracle

I have a blue chair; there is a blue rock  
and a weed in flower just before the hill  
begins in earnest. There is a little chorus  
somewhere down there and something that lost its voice  
a half century ago is starting up  
again; it was a tenor, it was a boy  
soprano, it lives by itself, it is  
disincarnate, it moves from C to C,  
and it is in a valley beside some mint,  
against a cherry. I sang my heart out. I learned  
to pipe early, I held my arms out, I buried  
one hand in another—so we could have something  
to do with our wrists, so we could expand our lungs  
at the same time, so we could warble, so we could last  
forever. Consider the basso profundo that sang  
as if he were a string, his voice expanded  
and shook, consider the alto. The hair on my face,  
the hormones in my heart, the flesh in my hand—  
this is how a soprano just disappeared  
and a hoarse baritone with a narrow range  
suddenly took her place. The sun in the desert  
going quickly down, the dark from nowhere, voices  
droning, voices shrieking, I am grateful.