

# CutBank

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## Ideas

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Patricia Goedicke

## Ideas

The thin bars of the traps we let down  
to catch gossiping lobsters, mere  
table talk or the deep, ongoing  
history of the sea's long standing  
affair with earth and where we stand on it  
and how, all the clever cat's cradles  
we weave for ourselves shudder  
at every passing fin. Each explanation  
we invent shines fitfully  
but proudly  
against the reefs it grows from

and wants to make love to,  
illuminate even those dark  
seething carpets of other, wilder  
hungrier scholars that seem almost  
to swallow us. In rippling schools. Masses  
of small bottom fish, corpuscles  
like fire leaping across chasms  
or slower, oozing into thick  
crusted layers. The seep of cells  
worm-like, secretly dividing  
and then multiplying into live  
clumped coral. Buzzing. With eager  
electric hooks, pronged feet, tiny  
red starfish hanging all over

the fringed eyehole we peer through, what  
ceaseless activity! Would they tear us  
apart?

No. They are too blind—  
too random for that. But both kinds  
of colonists urgently need  
each other, every answer  
comes caked with the prickly  
slime of barnacles, the  
cages we think we've erected  
against sharks and other predators are frail  
ghost crabs, their near see-through  
slats sway in the hissing crackle  
of the cold soup that created them.