

Fall 2018

Witness Marks

Andrew Szilvasy

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Recommended Citation

Szilvasy, Andrew (2018) "Witness Marks," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 88 , Article 11.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss88/11>

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ANDREW SZILVASY

WITNESS MARKS

Before he died, my father left the carcass
of a birds-eye maple table
in the basement, witness marks all laid out
for a drop leaf when the cancer

came, smoothing the round edge of his paunch
with its hand plane. Deathgray, the fat
man began to hate the smell of thyme
and onion, the texture of scallops.

When my mother moved we used it as a bier,
one leg missing and the top
barely proud of the apron, to remove
the last awls and adzes from

the cellar, bore them all up those long steps
to the cold light and set them
on our old sidewalk to wait for a stranger
who might never show up.