

Spring 1974

Aftermath

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Recommended Citation

Davis, William Virgil (1974) "Aftermath," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 3 , Article 3.

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AFTERMATH

Gulls slap against the sky, make one last dive,
Then disappear. I sit outside the shack
Protected by the hill's overhang and wait,
Watch the waves erase the land, watch them move
In under the rocks and crash. I add the sound
I cannot hear. I know there is no reason
For you to come back.

Still, just before dark,
I see your figure, hunched against the wind,
Come up the shore. Wet from the wind and rain
You follow me into the shack. I build a fire,
Heat up the coffee, turn on the radio
For the latest report on the storm. Nothing but static.
We sit without speaking, watching the sand spill
In around the leather flaps at the windows.

Suddenly, the storm strikes. Lightning lights
Your face, fixed in fear. The flash precedes
The thunder of your scream. All night, whenever
I wake to the twitching of the small ball of your body
Clenched tight around the empty bundle
Of your arms, I hear you whispering.

In the morning we have to climb out a window
To shovel the sand from the door. The beach
Is strewn with the storm's leavings: seaweed,
Shells, driftwood, dead fish, broken bones.
The tide out, we walk out to collect the useable
Debris, saying how we will make of this piece
Of driftwood a lamp, of that a marriage.