Fall 2012

Lil' Miss

Kristen Gunther

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Gunther, Kristen (2012) "Lil' Miss," CutBank: Vol. 1 : Iss. 77 , Article 18.
Available at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss77/18

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in CutBank by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
Someone was fly-fishing the North Platte the day they pulled her body from the water—half-naked, limbs cleaned in the slow current below the Old Government Bridge. They say when you find a woman like that, you know why. Missing eight days, dead two, the blunt force trauma would have killed her, never mind the knife. The case went cold as the river, no facts but a body, all the while the family keening, and the car buried deep in the prairie, and the man jailed in Colorado for something else.

and if they prayed

(I will make you fishers of men) and if they hoped to put a name to what snatched her and all the other Great Basin girls it came right not by god but by the scientific method, praise the police for helix-twists and eyewitnesses—fifteen years later, they dug up what he'd hid in Moneta, Wyoming, population ten. By then there was nothing more to keep coming up but the rayed limbs of her floater's body, the six cuts made into splayed flesh—the imagined all they had—that and his land the judge gave them where they would go and try to understand. And nothing to banish the river but fire. On the day they would have etched twice the years on her
headstone, they lit it up, the reeking shed of his, and shone, themselves, in yellow turnout coats from the County VFD who stood to the side—and if they didn’t cry

(where were you
when the daughters sang for joy)
it was that it might burn only half an hour, and if they prayed

(starfish, starfish)
it would have been for every broken thing made to live on again, and hunger.

Gunther 67