

CutBank

Volume 1
Issue 27 *CutBank* 27/28

Article 9

Fall 1986

The Woods

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Recommended Citation

Erdrich, Louise (1986) "The Woods," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 27 , Article 9.

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The Woods

At one time your touches were clothing enough.
Within these trees now I am different.
Now I wear the woods.

I lower a headdress of bent sticks and secure it.
I strap to myself a breastplate of clawed, roped bark.
I fit the broad leaves of sugar maples
to my hands, like mittens of blood.

Now when I say *come*,
and you enter the woods,
hunting some creature like the woman I was,
I surround you.

Light bleeds from the clearing. Roots rise.
Fluted molds burn blue in the falling light,
and you also know
the loneliness that you taught me with your body.

When you lay down in the grave of a slashed tree,
I cover you, as I always did;
this time you do not leave.

Louise Erdrich

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