

Winter 2006

An abridged history book & Totems

Bob Hicok

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

Hicok, Bob (2006) "An abridged history book & Totems," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 65 , Article 18.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss65/18>

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.

Bob Hicok

An Abridged History Book

Who was happier, the first person to braid hair or the first person to unbraid hair? Happiness is a recent concern, a porch light flicked on late in our existence. Since I am writing the history of this moment, I am writing the history of all moments, all robin and nightingale song, all torture song. I know (not suspect) it was the unbraider, the man (not woman) who touched the long curls of hair, of a mountain waves of a sea happier than the the hair into a stick down the happier than any made him— (the weight of a knowing of ques- a circle, why is round?). It was braiding and un- woman was leav- back, the day was ending: these are mate like chro- is how we see two eyes. Be- the hair and let- man went away, country, another chests of other their thoughts. ing the hair and strand gently on evening, the man ate an apple, the man touched himself, the man rubbed his closed eyes, inventing stars. The woman said to other women in the field, he has freed my neck, to other women of the senate, see how focused my beauty has become. And what of this: the stopped clock when the hair-tie was removed? And this: the sorrow of our unwoven days? Whenever I ask a question of these two, of the braid, I see them on the bed, night has exactly fallen, their shadows have slipped back into their bodies, and I am happy to feel this is the complete shape of the world, an inventory, a map.

Totems

I hang from the maple the saw which removed many of its limbs.

This is my dad's saw and orange tree in fall, my dad's wooden surgery.

I should like to wear around my neck all the things which have attacked me, the dogs and midnights.

When I walk to the garage, they'd thunk and tink together, a music of clashes keeping ghosts more away than they are.

He wants me to have what I want to have of his, so I follow him with rice paper, so I trace his face as he sleeps on the chair that opens into a bed.

This is the expression of two o'clock, this the mouth moonlight fills.

One day, I'll wear his face and set the trees free.

And touch where the chord of my mother spoke into me, the ear she burned into my stomach so I would not stop listening.

the long curves in hair, the long in hair. He was man who wove braid, into a woman's back, knowing had knowing of facts field of wheat), tions (if time is the tongue not the same man, braiding, and the ing and coming beginning and the pairs which mosomes, this things, given tween braiding ting it loose, the into another war, into the men, pulling out Between chain- placing each the breath of the