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Two Poems

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The woman upstairs
rattles to the sunrise.
splintered shell and egg
ooze at the foot of the ice box
for her seven cats,
a pink stocking bow
around the black one's neck.

She comes down for lentil soup,
tingling bells,
panting cool sweat.
Her frantic voice has frozen;
her tongue adheres to four words.
She lights a cigarette,
lets it drop
to knot the table's grain,
the flaming match
poised graciously
for a puff.

The policeman comes;
I tighten my ears for her screams.
She looks through me,
leaves quietly
as though
having awaited
his arrival.

Two Poems

by Melissa Simmons

I've heard language
is the refinement
of the groan;
and love
is not a word,
but perhaps
the murmur of a whale.

I know a man
whose words
plunge me
to Mariana depths,
lift me
to loll with cirrus.

He chooses them
with hesitation
though I listen
for their melody.