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Three Poems

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Scrimshaw: Violet & Jasper

harpoon-shot stiffness

*

bone & ivory —
pinched into
a fat wet handle
on your mother's hairbrush.

*

busks of baleen
tether torso
as if to strain plankton
from seawater

*

life poured from
krill-toothed bodies —
 bristled into words
of violet & jasper

*

to show resistance
to form, to question
 its own utility

*

fingers sculpt
bowhead into cup —

widen the holes to store fruit punch

TRIMMINGS

Her mouth trickled
spittle over sagebrush

tongue gone—
she dipped it
in prairie-fire &

sketched the land's silhouette
on hard palate

with Indian paintbrush.
Fistfuls of bitterroot
sown in her palm,

fringed from root
for various boats,

sundry & assorted
leaving, defying
their muted borders—

to tell others
of what they had found

those hairless spines
take root again