

Emily Dickinson's Love

This is why you hear the spasm in my verse:
I am in danger. The butcher's boy brings in

the red slabs. He pedals through yawning streets
where shops rise yeasty along the banks.

Here, even the stair's toothed grin curls
toward my room. Downstairs, eddies of guests.

Against the turbulence, I put the vise to my words.
And lately, a new calm — someone I love!

For someone, I fold my hair and sit in patient
white, immaculately worded, expecting the bare sun

unveiled. It is dark. Outside my window,
frogs harumph for love, and crickets blither.

You cannot imagine my love's abyss of possible
names. I am pruning, finding the one,

although I know the stairs stand guard between us.
My love is a stake on the polished floor below.

Softly, I close my door, straining to hear his whistle,
his cordial refrain, to press it to my sheet

like a rose, its dizzy whorl stain
against the white. You know the spasm

in my verse? The dash against the word?
The closet room, furnished with codes?

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