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Tale from Balzac: Bette

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Two Poems · *Zona Teti*

TALE FROM BALZAC: BETTE

A frog foretells the disease of the moon
and a woman breathes love she doesn't mean
and yet I live, in a throat-stroking wind,
watching grandpa seeds with their downy beards
look for space among the weeds.

Her child's face comes to me, bleached like mist.
That energetic doom in her mouth
when she paid too much for the family's meat
and her mother said, "I *am* sorry, dear."
She grew up sly as the shore-nibbling fish.

She hurts as many as she can, now pale
like a cave-life, now lit like day-mist,
and who am I to escape at last, sitting
here instead with comrades of grass? She wants
me hurt again in the split skin of a death.