

LESLEY WHEELER

Winter Language

One syllable of blood
and she sank into an almost-
faint, drained to the lips.
Her hair, this season
blue at the tips, swung
a wing across her cheek.
The silky owls on her pajamas
stared, all those pairs
of shocked eyes. *Open*
the window, she cried.
It squeaked with cold. The light
was full of snow. A wren
swooped past to the feeder below.

When she found her cool
again, we cracked wedges
packed with pomegranate seeds.
Sweet as woe and dry
as delight. Both of us
dizzied by her new height.
Open and closed, around
the moon's clock, croon
the birds, egging her on
to dare the words.