

THE WHALES

In the last decade the whales came back
diving and blowing in the bay

There should have been golden trumpets
fluttering pennants
proclamations on ribboned scrolls
at least a municipal brass band

Instead, we left our acres of cars
& stumbled along the breakwater
dropping ice-cream wrappers
blinking in the sea air
Overhead the seagulls squawked
& fought for soggy chips

But when we saw the whales we stopped
silent, awed

Rocked weightless by the waves they lolled
caressing and rolling, a fluid surging strength
bulk to sensuous bulk

Did they know we were there?
We wished so much for a sign
Take us with you, we cried, the air is too thin
Take us back to the deep.

Margaret Merrilees

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