

Ann Struthers

BONES

*I think the dead
Care little if they sleep or rise again.*
—Aeschylus

Throw the bones, shuffle the cards, read my fortune
in tea leaves. Alexander's flesh and bones are dust.

Lacemakers at sunny Dutch windows hold
their threads with bone bobbins. Old women knit

with bone needles. Oh, I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint.

Juliet's nurse, her bones old, her news new,
while the girl's heart is wax, melting in its bone cage.

I have felt like that: "Zero at the bone;"
when your hand touched me, all my bones froze.

I am afraid of many things, but not of the bones
the street curs worry with their mean muzzles.

What was made of my bone and flesh denies me,
a secret sorrow, a hollow place, a missing rib.

Caesar dead, Cleopatra and Marc Anthony, Hadrian
has left his gates, all of them gone, their bones crumbled.

Mother and David sleeping till the last trumpet,
their bones deep in the dark, indiscriminate earth.

Sometimes I hear the rattle of bones in the wind,
but never the knock I long for at the door.