

“Poem for the 35th Anniversary of Valium”

It is hard to please the dead,
they have such high standards.
Mint sauce? Pearls? The window seat or the aisle?
they sleep deeply,

the sleep we met as teenagers
curled in the rich
silt-beds of new pleasure.
It is hard even getting them to answer.

Banana Maple Marvel
or Cherry Vanilla?
It takes 206 bones to make a complete
human skeleton, but it has to be

the right bones.
Lord, do we live only to pass on our DNA?
Saint Sebastian was thrown into the Roman sewer
after his martyrdom by arrow,

though of course he didn't care
by that point (That's a joke).
The dead are alert to joy,
make no mistake, though they waft & sigh & flutter

and will not pay attention.
We with our bodies are here to serve them, and so
it is not their contempt but their peace
that makes us nervous.

My mother once made a lovely broth
with floating marrow bones
like tipping islands
of grease, sun-flecked and steaming.

A lovely broth.
When I miss her I know
I will never get enough to eat.