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Bones

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Lynn Barlow
Bones

I imagine myself in
the context of
your bed
I imagine myself a
collection of bones
on your sheets, white
against navy blue
tangled somehow, though
bones do not bend
they are brittle, they break
especially in the cold
I used to think that bones
were the core of people
skeletons— the architecture of
what it means to be human
calcium and marrow spanning
the gaps between us—
a skeletal solidarity
and greenstick fractures
were the worst thing I could
imagine happening to a body
internal structures exposed to
gravity and expelled violently
into the air, out of their element
but existing— I could be sure, then
that I had something permanent
inside of me, something enduring
like a soul but more concrete
more believable
now I imagine the feeling
of your hands on my bones
counting my ribs and grasping

my femurs, cupping my iliac crest
reaching down through skin and tissue
uncovering my truths, you could
do me a favor and check if there's
anything broken or missing
I felt a disconcerting crunch
a couple weeks ago and my mind
hasn't really been the same since.
I want you to hold my bones
in your hands and feel—
I am a display skeleton whose wires
have been carelessly cut and you
clearly have no idea where to start
my skull is mute and unhelpful
in your palm.

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