

she has never broken a bone in her life,  
not even the wishbone she smuggled from the table once  
(she felt bad about that afterwards,  
it was a waste.  
but selecting a wish for the making was no easy thing,  
and in the end she couldn't decide.  
better leave them all unsaid than pick the wrong one, she thought, and that was that).

burning specks of light blink in the air around her and the unspeakable thought she'd hidden  
away reveals itself in a smoky wisp.

more thoughts impress themselves upon the air,  
which by now is thick with the milk-skin of gasping fiction, and

## BLACKOUT

how can you ever find anything once it's been lost?  
maybe if you cut everything down,  
all the skyscrapers, jungles, castles, film-sets, greenhouses – *everything*,  
if you drained all the swimming pools and with the blade of your knife scraped every picture  
from the wall,  
then you might find the bones  
wherever they're hidden.

maybe.  
but bones fill a body,  
and a body fills space.  
it exists –  
somewhere.  
you can see it, first of all,  
and when your voice betrays the discovery of bones,  
you can hear it.  
you can hear yourself cry out, scream in fear, gasp for air.

There's a sound for that,  
there's a sound for dead.

dead is different.  
you can repeat the word *dead*,  
it's a whole word –  
nearly symmetrical.  
neat,  
like a box.

But she is not in a box,  
nor in the whole wide word *dead*.  
she could be anywhere.  
she could be running in streams down the mountainside or  
swimming beneath miles and miles of creaking ice or