

## SYLVIA LEGRIS / Three Poems

### *Details of Articulated Skeletons, c.1510* (after Leonardo da Vinci)

Memento marrow. The treacherous thread of the unnamed. The flourish-stripped reunion of broken parts.

The polymathematician (the osteo-horoscopist) plumbs the anonymous bones, the forlorn unspoken-for. Lead white, *bianco di piombo*, the poisonous orbit. An algebraic

of discrete desecration. Cancellous bone, cortical bone, an innominately rising hip bone. The acrimonious split of the acromion from the scapular spine. Explode the view . . .

Exploit the post-medieval zodiac. A moon-distending thorax; the gibbosity of the humeral head. The anteriorly tilting ascent of the pelvic girdle. False false ribs and the

acute angle of descent of rib one and rib two. *Memento mori*. Woe betide the Renaissance bonesetter. Bone-beset.

***The Anatomy of a Bear's Foot, c.1488–90***  
**(after Leonardo da Vinci)**

*Begin the anatomy at the head and finish at the soles of the feet. Strip bare the basilare osso. The weight-bearing cuboid bone.*

*Ursus arctos arctos* is meantone temperamental, exposed gamba, a *flexor digitorum brevis*-length song of the hunt, *plantigrade da caccia*, the sole-lumbering chase.

Metalpointed (the forager forged). The white-heightened tendons silver-tipped—by rod by wire by claw (ditto the *dito grosso del piede*, ditto the stony *ossi petrosi*). Oddly nodular,

the small-seeded sesamoid bones; the flat-footed marauder off-gait, *bellicoso*.

Terricolous, the pre-anatomized bear's bearing toe-in, direct-register, a stomp-walk to mark scent (*the soul that dwells within that architecture . . . a thing divine . . .*).

***A Skull Sectioned, c.1489***  
(after Leonardo da Vinci)

Each frail luminous globe takes flight . . .

—Baudelaire / Trans. Keith Waldrop

Saw off the barbaric ice, the Medieval glacial morbidity.

Nip the postmortem mid-whiff 'midst cold slab, metal, the drifting snow of  
discover and unearth. Midwinter the cut-time.

*Da capo, da capo.* From the head a deceptive cadence. Trip the tempo'd  
trepanum, the singing bone saw, the ink drawn fantastic

through *ductus nasolacrimalis*, through the paranasal sinuses, through a  
well-chosen cross-section of *foramen mentale*.

Then cut across the *canalis mandibulae* in the moments it takes to murmur a  
*Miserere*. Have mercy

on the little city. The merciful cadaver. The bony *cittadella*.