

# SKELETON

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*After Christopher Smart*

For I will consider the bones of the world  
For the bones of the high-rise he lives in are steel, and give, just slightly, to wind  
For the bones of Denali, he thought while descending, are made of sterner stuff  
For on discovering bones of Civil War dead, they agreed to tell no one, afraid that their land  
would be seized  
For a sliver of bone may be magic, so implies the bishop as he consecrates the altar  
For 1.5 million years pass before his bones are reassembled, and since what he once was  
is no more, they name him Turkana Boy  
For what radiated from the elbow where she struck it on the table, was not, no matter what  
bone she hit, funny  
For give a dog his due, the bone, a little meat like a stole around the joint  
For on traveling a great distance to see him, and handing him her ring to toss the bones, she  
gave up her decision to the way they fell  
For after he lost his leg—the Airport Road, IED—it was flesh and bone, some nights, he felt  
below the knee, still burning  
For her bone to pick with him left her in the E.R. with a bullet, him in Rikers  
For on Saturday morning's *Creature Feature*, and then in nightmare, dead men rose: all clean  
white bone and empty sockets in the dark  
For *Life Magazine*, May 22nd, 1944, published the photo of a Japanese skull, war souvenir, set on  
the desk of a girl, bow in her hair, penning a thank you to her beau

For the mass graves of Rudnica, Kigali, Treblinka all shuffled bone, all cry, still, one horror,  
one body shared

For at 92, she lay down her weary bones, thinking these are mine, these bones I rest, though they  
are weary for bearing me all these years

For later she woke him, the money he'd lost a bone in her throat

For so it is written in the most respected journals, taught in the halls of great universities,  
the first weapon was bone in a clumsy hand, the first hook a needle of bone

For by extension, he said, leaning in, every bone in your body is star, nova, accretion, and time

For his cat Jeffery's 240 bones lie forever far from him, his own 206 bones far from the  
madhouse that held him

For, make no bones about it, before she was gone she was gone