

LYNN DOMINA

DRY BONES

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Ezekiel balances the rib
on his fingertip, comforted
by its parabolic curve, its regular
swing. Stepping left or right,
he crushes ankles, jaws, vertebrae, scatters
heaps of bleached bones. This rib—
perhaps a man's, one who loved
pottery or weaving, perhaps
a dog's or goat's. This skull
tipping onto his foot an infant's,
small as his palm, flattened,
toothless, dead before it could nuzzle
its mother's breast, hear her hum
evenings as dusk wavered
through their valley. Ezekiel imagines

a woman's forearm
supporting her child's spine,
sees her fingers nesting in his curls.
He considers the command: prophesy,
raise them up, each one
wondrous and living, thick
with flesh and desire. Ezekiel sees

the infant grow, squirm from his mother's lap,
tag after his tall cousin. He grows
until his arms and calves bulge
and then curls his hand
around a spear and thrusts it
into the drunk's heaving chest, cutting short
such stuporous slander.

No. He murders no one, this infant
squalling back at Ezekiel who prophesies,
promising sinews and skin
and spirit. The plain dampens
with drizzle. Bones heave upright,
stagger into their sockets, clashing
one into another like mallets,
like truncheons. Ezekiel covers
his ears, squints his eyes
against bewildered rage, these creatures
revived with the promise of another
death, their ears alert
to distant howls,
wolves already pausing
to sniff pungent flesh.