

Elegy

This place remembers.
Echoes trace the line of palettes --
the dead speak,
names writ on slips of earth.

The point at which the body burns
is felt physically:
heat on skin
swell of lungs
sting in noses
tilt of heads
carbon steel chimney stacks.
We inhale the dead
in full breaths.

Ashes arrive in satchels,
apart from urns.
Part of the ceremony
is pouring our dead
into cusps of silver.
The aim is
to conquer death.

Mourning lines the spine of spirit,
bends a body at the belly
wailing.