

I Dig Your Bones

(for Tonya)

It was the hum of your bones
when I plucked them
that finally got me.
As if I was an archaeologist
that sifted through foreign soil,
knees pressed deep
into the black earth of Iowa.
My fingers with a gold digger's precision,
would run fast and efficient,
—a farmer winnowing
the husk from the lean wheat stalks.
But I'm not hip to the ways of the farmer,
And I wasn't digging for gold,
I was just looking for one hearty soul
with a dream to connect.
And I found you
in Middle America
singing the soft ballads of corn rows
spread against heavy-low skies
filled with fever,
and big, orange, Iowa suns,
singing softly the boney blues
of pale polished bones that seemed placed
by O'Keefe, precisely
at the perfect angle and the skin hung
carefully, slowly over.
My fingered traced these outlines
stroking each weathered place
until you hummed low.

-Editha Ann Wilberton