

## The Paleontologist with an Ear Infection

I am hearing through my bones  
Older noises you don't lean into.  
This morning's shower beat upon my skull  
Till I was clean as an echo,  
Sentience with the dust knocked out.

In the lab, a buzz and scrape rise in my back  
As I fit vertebra to vertebra to the bony  
Plate of the triceratops, its lumbering spine  
Fossilized to brutal hardness still aquiver  
Beneath my hands, inside my ears.

Now it is a hum along my jaw.  
How can a cry heard one hundred  
And thirty-five million years be old?  
Always this beast feeds. The howl  
Of the mortal fights its way out and in.

—Susan Howe