

Genesis

Jason swaggered through
the Smithsonian—
his right hand
clutching my finger
as if he were
pulling the cord—
whistling
to clear the tracks.

With his free hand
he blessed
a symmetrical stack of bones.

“El-e-phant!” he pronounced
syllabically,
enlivening the petrified—
fleshing out a form
long since iced.

He helped me see
beyond a jungle
of rope and trees
and away from a fortress
of wall and snake
to a parading garden
rising
like a gentle mist
from the earth.

—Robert M. Hogge