

## **When the dead come back you have to take off the grief**

which is hard, like trying to melt snow  
that isn't snow. You have to locate all the grief on your person

and remove it in a safe and responsible manner.  
Frisk yourself. Empty your pockets.

You have to rummage around in yourself  
and take out all of the grief-shaped stones, which is hard,

like trying to usher a sunset back into the sky,  
or like trying to sweep away your own

shadow. You have to dismantle the tent of your grief  
and wrestle it back into the small bag

you found it in, which is hard, like trying to un-dig a grave  
or un-engrave the name on a gravestone.

When it rains you have to wash your heart in the rain.  
You have to sneak out at night and glue

the lemons back on the lemon tree. Put the pictures back  
on the wall. Pretend that grief is a country

you are not acquainted with, whose language is  
unknown to you, whose artefacts you

have never weighed in your hands, but  
it's hard, because you are, and it isn't, and you have.

## Lions

I don't know what they mean when they say  
that death is *a part of life*, as if

the cloud that scrubs out the sun is somehow  
a part of the sun. Is the lake

that drowns the boy a part of the boy,  
the knife somehow an accomplice of what bleeds?

All that Hamlet really says is *Yeah,*  
*life sucks, but what comes next could suck even more.*

I've never asked Jimmy if he actually meant to die  
when he swallowed the whole

packet of painkillers,  
or whether he thought he knew

what comes after. I've never been sure of anything but  
I admit there's a special beauty to certainty:

the horse which loses its jockey in the second or third furlong  
but keeps running and wins the race,

or the sculptor of stone lions  
who – when asked about his work – says

*Honestly, it's easy, you just chip away whatever isn't lion.*