

LAURIE CLEMENTS LAMBETH

Not to Praise

Between radius and tumored ulna,
crepidis softening bone to sponge,
a knob of muscle and tendon forces
out, while and skin expands to contain it.

That foreleg forms new shape,
necessary sculpture, innovation.
Not bronze, no patina here. Ephemeral
art I could call it, but that would not

praise the body's modification
for survival, propulsion. Angle
of valgus measured, steps bending
the paw inward to arc. Nightly my hands

pass here: lymphatic massage, thirty strokes.
I have seen the pulmonary metastases
inflate like birthday balloons
on radiograph. I have monitored

the dog's bright, flecked skeleton
through nuclear scans, the bone
gone to abstract lace:
worryingly beautiful, fierce potential.