

**Back Bone**  
By Denisha Naidoo

A  
vertebrae  
of a whale      dry bone  
face carved      on what I know  
is the front      because I know  
anatomy      surface porous  
desiccated      where once  
long ago      smooth  
full of fluid      blood cells  
spinal process      out rigger  
central canal    once housing      spinal column      signal tail to slap    fins to flap  
rose for air and dove      mouth open collecting      a piece of ecosystem contracting  
worn from waves on shore      abrasions of sand slowly  
reclaim part of me    tilting slightly where I sit  
listing I hover above the surface as proof  
of my connection to something outside myself  
beyond this world    a large particle of a being  
whose energy has dissipated into the  
universe    a reminder that  
not all that is lost  
is gone