The remaining questions

you may ask about
deformed structure: a white root onion bulb behind eyes, or
boggy green-grape bulging under knuckles, or the green
sprouts shooting from the carina, or the bifurcation
of open-lung
shaped as a bird’s breastbone: sensual, white, snowy, open paths:
the things that remind us of the first cut in surgery, or me of
his legs apart in the evening;
you may ask about the paper-mache of our environment
mapped on the undressed body: a raspberry rash
or the leaky shimmer of virus-vesicles
nailed newly, painfully, on her back as
new shingles for the roof of her chest; or the
coracoid: the raven’s beak
and the writing desk of shoulder tissue where it perchers, or
the way the sella turcica sits precariously
atop the equine mind; the lunate: that deep, slow, concave
dimple-bone poised in the hands of
our root-skinned darlings as they bath us and
promise us poetry;
you may ask about the diffuse, metabolic whirring,
the humming invisible that makes chefs weep as they chop:
the electric ions in motion in blood:
a tick in potassium, a splash of acid, a white cell—

but

some questions are the stationary swept aside
on office desks to make room
for hurried lovers: whether he loved him and whether
the rectal tumour makes it painful
to love him still;
or whether she, in older age, ever wants to take a man
with her teeth and whether she feels she can,
if she wanted to: but we must not ask
about the unsnarled body’s desires
so acutely preserved, laid with shy hands on the breakfast table,
for daily swallowing, for tucking in;
or whether my stethoscope
feels like a man’s metal-cold, unwanted hands
beneath her breast; or if the barring of
his fresh, lit, sparky cigarettes in hospitals
was, all along, behind
his refusal to stay.

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