

Bereavement Dinner

Nobody wants to talk about the fish
Grandma liked; driving to the Grill, we all
forgot, instead nursed the elephant wish
for time and words with her, the spiral
of guilt, by talking jewelry. We appall
ourselves. We left her casketed, kissless,
alone. So I'm surprised to find, here, a wall
that shuts us up. A sailfish, boisterous,
is mounted, arcs above the diners, us,
five feet from beak to tailfin glinting blue.
It grins. Aunt Linda boldly tells the waitress
the part I hadn't known—the fish on view
was hooked by Grandma, hauled and fought at length,
a monstrous embodiment of her strength.

