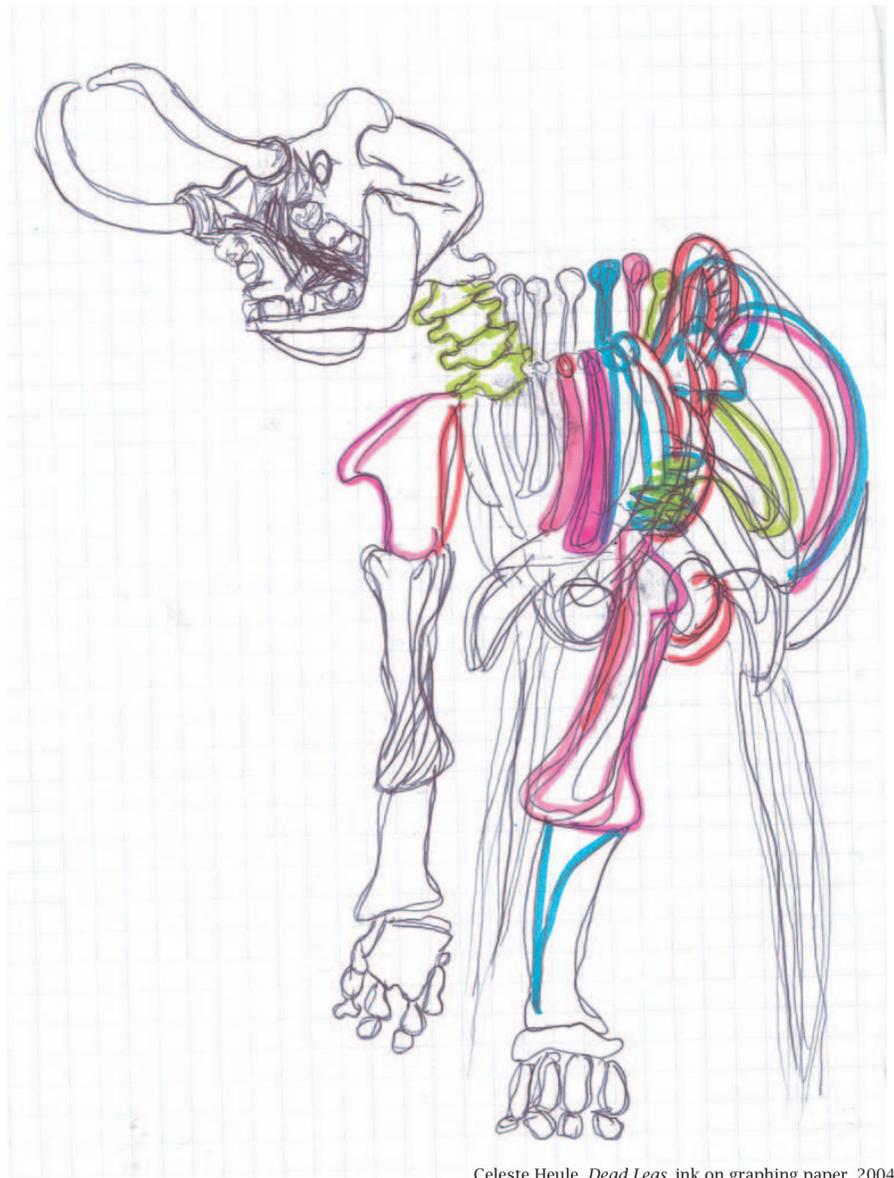


## I WANT YOU

to fit a new transmission  
into language  
and hotwire the motherfucker.  
Use those hands of yours,  
those hands  
that finish the functions  
of welding torches, metal  
sanders, and two-inch ratchet  
wrenches. Expand  
the intake, cut the exhaust  
and lift in the engine block  
with those hands  
that have fitted us  
together  
so many times.  
Set the drive shaft  
to ranging the length of the chassis  
until the whole body hums  
with its new tongue.  
Grind me  
the only set of keys,  
with a lucky turn of phrase  
jangling on the chain,  
and hide them behind  
my father's house  
the day before  
you suck laps on the street  
where he met my mother, past  
the liquor store, over  
the flaking curbs  
at city hall. Then let it idle  
for a minute before you  
tear off the muffler  
and stomp on the accelerator  
until everyone comes squinting out  
for their lunch break, gasping  
at the rhythm  
you made me.  
The mayor  
will blurt out, blinking  
in the sun  
and holding his ears,  
"what's the meaning of this?"  
Because I want that rig  
to roar as loud as the sun is hot,  
I want the tire tracks

you write on main street  
to spell my name  
and stink like a body shop.  
I want to hear it coming for me  
over half a county of dirt roads.  
And you'll get out  
and slam the door  
with your stick shift hand,  
slam it so hard  
daddy looks up  
from pattering with the  
lawnmower.  
And you'll say you're here for me  
and the cut grass

will stain your boots  
with little dashes,  
crisp as typesetting.  
I'll be down the porch steps,  
keying the ignition  
before he can even speak,  
and I'll be ready  
with a reverse drop  
that scrawls a mean turn  
in the yard  
and leaves him  
with his lawnmower  
and its tiny, little  
voice, whirring goodbye.



Celeste Heule, *Dead Legs*, ink on graphing paper, 2004