

Reading at the Anatomy Museum

by Kirsty Logan

Through the stuttering doors of the other
hall lurks a gathering of spare souls who saved
for hardbacked notebooks and empty time
to be filled with fictions. Shivering under
desk lamps, lit by three dozen eyes, they read
words splintered with marrow and memory.

Everyone listening is lost in memory
triggered by the vowels in the story of other
people's mistakes, made real by being read
between these glass-lined walls. Objects saved,
preserved, labeled in tubes, pressed under
slides. Bodies snapshot just in time.

Those remnants absorbed their sun, now it's time
for the papering writers to argue their memory
with confessions. Bones are just bones under
the dress of skin, and now these organs are other,
thoroughly undone, slices of person saved
under microscopes, like palms to be read.

Perhaps the clumsy power of stories being read
could cause organs to flutter, to wake just in time
for these stored body parts to be saved,
to become more than an anatomist's memory.
Perhaps stories can rouse cells merged with other
bodies, hidden beneath strangers' skins, deep under

donated organs. Stories kept warm, pressed tight under

the weight of flesh. If you know how, all bodies can be read like books, like poems, like scraps of song made of other lives in cursive. Stories exist as air. They have no time, no place. Bodies in glass cases are a way to preserve memory, to label life in neat boxes. A story is shreds of a person, saved.

When the bodies rise, full of prose, finally saved by story, these sheathed writers will not hide under their torn pages. They will rise up on bloody memory, shout their synapses to the roof. For hours they have read to convince an audience of their solidity. Now there is time only for verbs. Walls won't hold. There can be no other

use for memory now but to save the bones of others. Brace them under the pages you read while you still have time.

