

The Coroners' Wife
by Evelyn Sharapova

Autolysis:

I have tried to find some distinction between analysis and love
Truthfully there is none.
When you look at me, I wonder if I am already one of your corpses
I see the gears turning in your mind
identifying pancreas, liver, and stomach below my epidermis.
Will your last act of tenderness be my autopsy?
I see you check your watch
Once, twice, three times.
As if you are lying in wait for rigor mortis to set in.
How long will that take? 10 minutes? An hour?
If I show up on your table tomorrow, will you recognize me?
Accident prone as I am, it would be easy to label the cause of death as natural
But my own skin crusted beneath my fingernails will tell you otherwise.
I can cling to you as long as I want, but I can never take the scalpel out of your hand

Bloat:

I have become simply another task before you can return home and sit on your couch.
Cheeto dusted fingertips and late night TV
Decaf coffee and shiny new magazines
The grocery bags under your eyes resemble purple plum bruises
You take the ring off my finger and place it in a plastic evidence bag, I want you to pocket it.
Wear it on a necklace around your neck
A gruesome reminder of the small-town coroners wife
So mechanically, you move
So precise so delicate
My body is no longer mine

Active Decay:

You like to pretend the people on your tables are dolls.
They mean nothing, because they were never real to you
I look in the mirror and the sallowness of my skin tells me I have already died.
Something in the way you speak to me tells me you are simply waiting to dissect me
Figure me out through bone saw and cerebellum
Wipe away the rot that has already begun to gather in the corner of my eye
Reveal something easier to understand.

Skeletonization:

There's a hunger in your eyes
that I can't quite identify
as you ever-so-carefully anatomise my brain
Your questions never rattle me, though I get the feeling that you wish to crawl into my skin
Take refuge in my diaphragm
As you pull me apart
A parasite at best, a husband at worst.