

D.M. Mitchell

Autopsy: Internal Examination

I move to the window, unable and unwilling to look at you. You lay there silently, one hand draped across your stomach, the other dangling from the edge of the bed. I know this without looking. It's such a familiar pose for you. Your eyes are probably hurt by my coldness and the distance between us. There is no fight left in me. I look at the sky. A jet leaves a trail across the sky like an ugly stretch-mark.

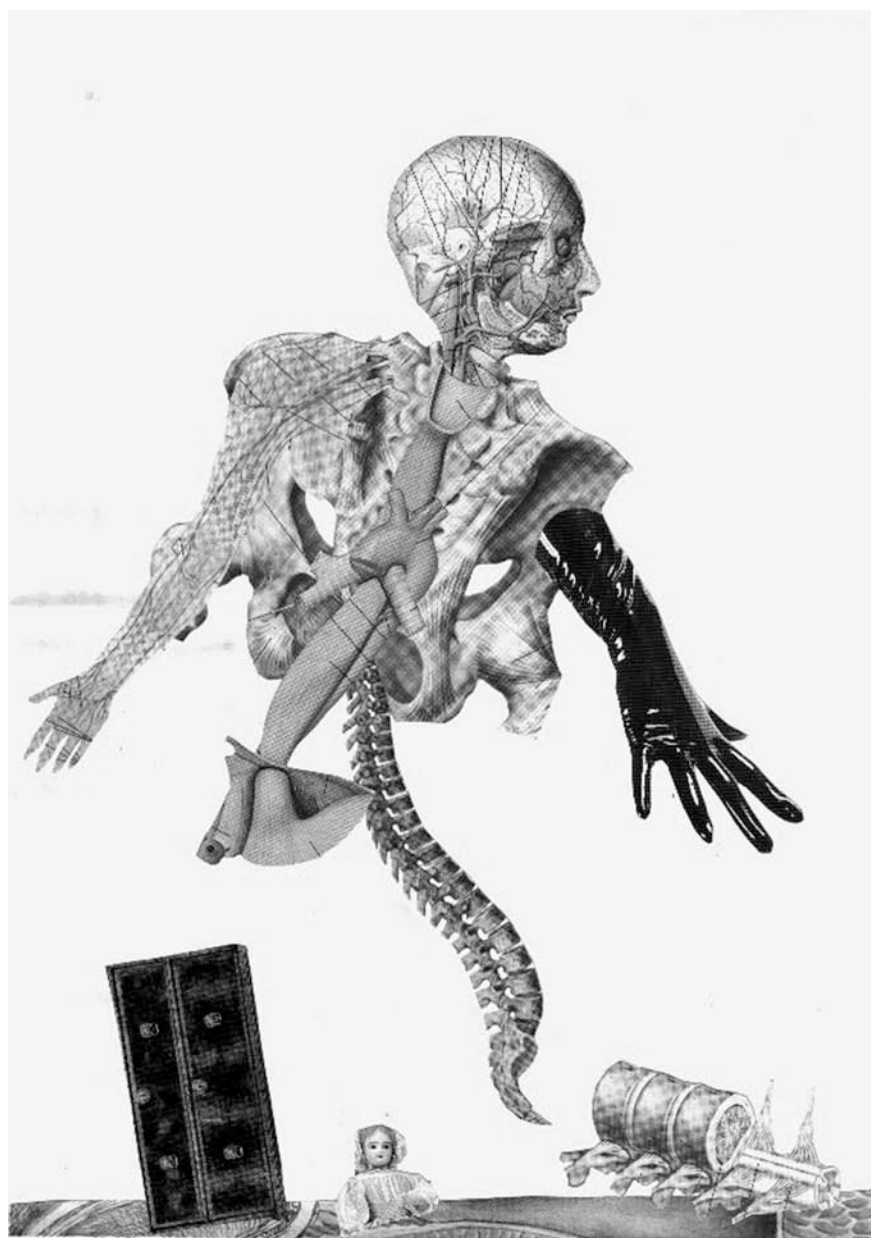
The internal examination starts with a large, deep, Y-shaped incision that is made from shoulder to shoulder meeting at the breast bone and extends all the way down to the pubic bone. When a woman is being examined, the Y-incision is curved around the bottom of the breasts before meeting at the breast bone.

I try to make love to you. I whisper your favourite obscenities, my hand between your legs as you rub yourself desperately against my wrist, my fingers in your cunt. Your orgasm, as usual, lifts you off the bed. "I want cock!" you gasp and roll away from me. I enter you and fuck you as hard as I can, already knowing I'm not going to come. In the sky another jet traces over the path of the other one as though trying to erase it.

The next step is to peel back the skin, muscle and soft tissue using a scalpel. Once this is done, the chest flap is pulled up over the face, exposing the ribcage and neck muscles.

You're not here. You send me obscene text messages, which I don't

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bother to answer. I turn my phone off and toss it into a drawer. The glass in the bay window vibrates with the passing of a truck. I look the length of the hallway into the long mirror at the other end. I've lost a lot of weight and started to put on some muscle again. The face seems strange, as though its planes were in the process of realigning to fit some new desires and urges. Have my eyes changed colour?

Two cuts are made on each side of the ribcage, and then the ribcage is pulled from the skeleton after dissecting the tissue behind it with a scalpel.

I'm drunk, listening to loud music. One of the children is crying. I ignore it. I know the different sounds they make and what they mean. This is a whiney insincere cry. They're best left ignored; otherwise, you encourage them to manipulate you through faked emotions. I've been hacking your work email now for months. I know about your 'friend'. I'm not jealous. On the contrary, I'm rather relieved. I hope he can pleasure you because I'm sick of trying.

With the organs exposed, a series of cuts are made that detach the **larynx**, **esophagus**, various **arteries** and **ligaments**. Next, the medical examiner severs the organs' attachment to the **spinal cord** as well as the attachment to the **bladder** and **rectum**. Once this is done, the entire organ set can be pulled out in one piece and dissected for further investigation.

"You know what some people say... about how when their kids are grown up they can go and do things separately? Well, we're not going to be like that are we?"

I can't look at you.

"No. We won't be like that."

I've been fucking a stranger for the last thirteen years.

During this dissection, the various organs are examined and weighed and tissue samples are taken. These samples take the form of "slices" that can be easily viewed under a microscope. Major blood vessels are also bisected and examined.

The apple tree is in blossom. By the time you next visit it will have borne