



An Inconclusive Autopsy

Death, unexpected, rolled in on a cot,
demanded explanation, so I got
a warrant for my court of last resort
to grill the newly dead, file a report.

From sternal notch to pubic symphysis
I whipped my blade, his overalls unzipped.
Then Duschka crossed the T, flayed back the flaps,
down to the pectoralis and the lats.

Then clutched his cutters, crunched each helpless rib,
revealed, beneath that corrugated bib
the thorax triptych's splendid symmetry:
tall sentry lungs, a rufous heart—lust-free.

We slit the belly fascia down the seam.
A coiled boa, his intestines gleamed.
Esophagus to rectum splayed that snake:
sans tumor, tear, congenital mistake.

The liver was a smooth brown stone. The spleen
was plush with purple pulp, a prosperous bean.
From beds beside the backbone bulge we plucked
two renal oysters—clean, both whole and shucked.

We gathered nuggets, nuts and sweet viands:
the testes, thyroid and adrenal glands.
Duschka held them close to hear the hum
those dynamos unwinding softly spun.

Across the top I sliced from ear to ear,
then peeled the scalp skin fore and aft to clear
his downy crown so Duschka could bear down
and buzz the bone saw all the way around.

Those convoluted gyres! each mortal sore
deposits there its band of bitter ore.
Thus full of hope, we set to mine those lobes.
carved down wide walls, but just dull clay exposed.

In sum, we found no flaws—no gross disease,
nor any microscopic subtleties.
His parts just stopped—no reason they did so.
But then,
we've never figured out what makes them go.

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