

Four Poems

Kristin LaFollette

Plastic Cadaver

At an antique
shop with many
hallways and rooms

full of
collectibles,

I found an anatomical
model with

red and
blue

blood vessels,
an exposed brain,
an eye with the

inner workings
visible.

I recognized
some of the
intricately placed
plastic organs,

the spleen,
kidneys,
aorta

nestled
beneath
layers of
rib—

The organs felt
sticky when I

touched them

and I
wondered about
the blood and

preservation fluid
that may have
touched them,
gloved hands
going
from model to

human specimen
and back

again in a lab
somewhere
many years

ago.

I pictured my
family at my birth
exclaiming

Let a doctor be born!

yet
I've never
been
pediatrician
or
ophthalmologist

but
I
can
write
a
poem
with words like lung
and bone

Sustainability

I think I'm not the same person anymore

Perhaps I've grown into the descriptions
on a diagram of flower anatomy—

I am both the pistil and the receptacle

Once nothing more than clavicles, my spongy parts
have become green,
filled with sugar from the

sun In my new body, I am misunderstood
Not many people speak the same words
I do—

On second thought, I only need to know how
to say

I'm not who I was

I still pray, but with different sounds

When I open my mouth, I censor myself,
my eyes, dark like soil in the bottom
of a hole, say the truth as a I know it—

Hear me

Hear me

Hear me

Genetic, Part II

I feel my bones shifting the older I get / breaking and reforming into shapes that more closely resemble my mother / I feel a twinge in my lower back / the same one she's complained about for years / a problem recently fixed with surgery / the doctor hollowing out bits of her spine to make space for a nerve he referred to as *angry* and *aggravated* / words people have probably used to describe both of us at one point or another /

In the hospital / after the surgery / I realized how I always thought of her as God / and as I helped her lift a can of Sprite to her mouth, I remembered what's left of our tibias / skin / and / blood / how my oldest brother always mistakes my voice for hers on the phone / I handed her a bag of crackers / watched her remove them one at a time / take small bites out of the corners & chew /

What I know now: My skeleton is burdensome like my mother's /

quick to take on water and slow to heal

Genetic, Part III

My vessels are traumatic / extend from my kidneys in branches to my extremities / my bones
blood-starved from giving so much away / I never liked needles until I heard about my own
father's transfusion / and I pictured him taking on cells that didn't resemble his own /

A lab technician told me I am

B *positive* like neither of my parents: /

ME → MY MOTHER /

ME ← MY FATHER / but that the other way around would be *dangerous* /

I have two siblings and I know nothing of their blood / except that it must be

A or *B* *positive*

according to science / I never understood the liquid in us until I helped birth two children / both
girls / as if women have more blood /

while working in a hospital I could smell it / the smell like how it tastes when you bite your
cheek / hot and coppery / I thought I could be a doctor / but I realize I don't have enough / and
what's left is quick / yet unremarkable

Kristin LaFollette (she/her) is a writer, artist, and photographer and is the author of the chapbook, *Body Parts* (GFT Press, 2018). She is a professor at the University of Southern Indiana and serves as the Art Editor at *Mud Season Review*. You can visit her on Twitter at @k_lafollette03 or on her website at kristinlafollette.com. As a fan of surrealism, her favorite bird is the one in Remedios Varo's painting, *The Creation of the Birds*.