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Clyde the Cadaver

Gabriella Fora
Concordia University-Portland

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Your grandchildren hate you.
Your children hate you.
You hate you.
Why won't you just die?
Hope I don't see you at Christmas.
Love,
Jacquelyn

Visiting with Clyde, I'd say he never looked better, for a cadaver that is. The top of his skull lay next to his open head as if it were the bicycle helmet that he forgot to put on that day. The slits of his eyes were draped by his hooded lids, but I was told his glossed marble eyes were still underneath. At first I had no intention of touching anything; I could barely stand up straight. But suddenly something inside me grabbed a pair of gloves and went at it.

Clyde's lungs were like hard, dried up sponges, as if too much clay got stuck within the holes. His heart was the motor of his body, and just like the engine of the fastest car, this one raced blood through his veins until his last breath. I ran my finger up and down the telephone line that made up the arm's tendon—as it was, literally, a signal and response mechanism. The meat on his shoulder reminded me of roast beef that's been left too long in the oven and begun to dry out.

Later that day I was asked to go out for some barbecue, but I instantly declined, for the only image I could muster up was Clyde's ribs, smothered in barbecue sauce.