

ECDYSIS

New Latin, from Greek ekdysis act of getting out, from ekdyein to strip, from ex- + dyein to enter.

Dissection Instructions

1. *Place the frog in the dissecting pan ventral side up.*

2. *Use scissors to lift the abdominal muscles away from the body cavity. Cut along the midline of the body from the pelvic to the pectoral girdle.*

3. *Make transverse (horizontal) cuts near the arms and legs.*

4. *Lift the flaps of the body wall and pin back.*

**If your specimen is a female, the body may be filled with eggs and an enlarged ovary.*

You may need to remove these eggs to view the organs.

Locate each of the organs:

Fat Bodies—*Spaghetti-shaped structures that have a bright*

You'd expect counting:

100, 99, 98, 97

but no,

no numbers
just

a mask

the smell
of plastic
of shower curtain
of chemical
like airplane air

Deep breaths.

And then

nothing.

* * *

Impossibly

dry
like too many
cotton balls
stuffed inside

a mouth

It was a time before this time.

Trees everywhere. Running streams.

Gods, creatures, the whole nine yards.

She ate abundantly.
Apples, figs,
especially almonds
and chocolate, the good stuff,
wrapped in French paper,
a gift from the gods.

But when she loved a man
who didn't love her
she ate everything in sight.

First she gorged on apples
then figs—fruits on trees, shrubs,
vegetables greening on vines.

She cracked all the almonds,
the salted and not,
and ate every pistachio
even though she didn't like them.

orange or yellow color (if you have a particularly fat frog, these fat bodies may need to be removed).

Peritoneum—*A spider web-like membrane that covers many of the organs.*

Liver—*The largest structure of the body cavity. This brown colored organ is composed of three parts, or lobes.*

Heart—*At the top of the liver, the heart is a triangular structure.*

Lungs—*Locate the lungs by looking underneath and behind the heart and liver. They are two spongy organs.*

Gall Bladder—*A small green sac under the liver.*

Stomach—*Curving underneath the liver is the stomach. Frogs swallow their meals whole.*

Who knew dry
could be like
pain, like
hell?

Water, please?

No, no water,
But ice chips,
yes,
and a pink sponge
swab
like heaven
like sucking on
the smallest knob
of life.

No, no nausea. Tired, yes
and fuzzy, so much fuzz.

It's the sticky disk behind
my ear making me dry,
keeping me from heaving.

More ice, please?

She plucked tomatoes, pulled
potatoes, no cooking—
no thinking—fished all the fish
from the sea.

She devoured clouds and
drank the sky.

Creatures fled.

She gorged on chocolate,
ate it all in one sitting, even
the gilded French paper.

Her hunger kept growing.
She began to eat her feelings:

Sadness, sorrow, hate, and fear.
Envy, jealousy, hope.

She even ate the love
for the man
who didn't love her.

She could no longer move,
but rolled, ungracefully,
along the ground.

Pyloric Sphincter Valve—
Regulates the exit of digested food
from the stomach to the small
intestine.

Small Intestine—Leading from
the stomach.

Large Intestine—Also known
as the cloaca, the last stop before
wastes, sperm, or urine exit the
body. (“Cloaca” means sewer.)

Spleen—Dark red spherical, a
holding area for blood.

Esophagus—The tube leading
from the mouth to the stomach.

Removal of the Stomach:

*Cut the stomach out of the frog and
open it up.*

*You may find what remains of
the frog’s last meal.*

*Look at the texture of the stomach
on the inside.*

*What did you find in the stomach?
Write it down.*

And the nurse feeds me chips,
one, then two,
like a baby

* * *

The surgeon listens, looks, asks
then writes.

Four small sutures, slashes
on my belly—
a fifth larger one
that, yes, hurts.

The x-rays show the band,
like a belt
at the top of my
stomach, barium fluid.
flowing as it should.

And we review directions:
Liquids only. Soft food
later—in two weeks.

*Anything strange, I ask,
while you were poking around?*

*No, he says, flipping, scanning
tightly typed pages.
Remarkably unremarkable.*

A crab found her—
he had escaped (claimed
he tasted bad).
He was not kind:

*You’re bursting at the seams,
he said. Hideous.*

And she knew it was true.
Skin chafing. Bloat. Smell.
Thickness. Shoulders and knees,
coming undone.

And she thought she didn’t care,
but she did.

She wanted to notice
the world around her—

She asked the crab
how he did it—his hard exterior
and nimble legs.

*Low to the ground, he said,
and I regularly reinvent myself.*

And he taught her the secret,
of growing within,
of shedding the old, beat up skin.

She called herself Ecdysis.
Slowly, she renewed.