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I Am Not a Doctor

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CHRISTINA MILES

I Am not a Doctor

I am not a doctor; I am a writer.
I don't think I would switch.
Why? Because, I call

My sister, and we talk. She says,
while driving home from medical school,
"I smell like a cadaver." We talk more.
I ask why. "Because we started dissecting
today. We're working on the neck,
and moving down from there."
"Oh, of course." What else could
I say? I call her two weeks later.
"We are playing with the arms,
practicing shots. I got Fred in the
deltoid." She named her cadaver Fred.
"How fun," I say. At the end of the semester,
Fred's torso has been pulled apart and pieced
back together. "I think we'll need new
bodies in January. Fred looks
rather mangled." she says.

But me? I tell her about my writing
class: the stories I've written
and ones I'm reading. "They say
Ezra Pound spent ten hours a day
editing poems." I edit mine, injecting
iambes and analyzing meter. When
it's done, every sentence has been
changed. "I'm glad we're starting
a new genre next semester," I
say. "I feel rather mangled, and I
think I reek of syntax."