

2019

Anatomical Life Drawing for the Illustrator

Amy Lemmon

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/bpr>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#), and the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lemmon, Amy (2019) "Anatomical Life Drawing for the Illustrator," *Birmingham Poetry Review*: Vol. 46, Article 69.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/bpr/vol46/iss2019/69>

This content has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of the UAB Digital Commons, and is provided as a free open access item. All inquiries regarding this item or the UAB Digital Commons should be directed to the [UAB Libraries Office of Scholarly Communication](#).

Amy Lemmon

Anatomical Life Drawing for the Illustrator

I

This introductory course in anatomy and life drawing focuses on the skeletal and muscular systems of the body in order to understand the human form, its proportions, contours, and characteristic periphery of movement.

After a drink or two, our old friendship,
the stories of our lives the past eight years
are mingled in a grand romantic script
complete with dinner, wine, dessert and—*Cheers!*—

a nightcap at the King Cole Bar. Perfection
the grand display of Parrish's nursery rhyme.
You point out lines and shadings, the inflection
of light and color. We kiss for the tenth time,

the artist's golds and blues collide and melt.
And then we're off—time for a new life study
a panoply of heat, contour, and movement.
Peel back the layers, and reveal the body.

What have we learned? Our parts become a whole
new form, combined, we barely can control.

II

This course extends the understanding of basic anatomy for the artists. Students learn to artistically render the human form through the exploration of composition, perspective, mood, and the effects of light.

Next time, you take me to the gallery.
I see your world: delicious and complex
enough to swallow pain and spit out glee.
The pictures crowd the walls, we crane our necks

to see the honorees above the throng.
Their colors swim on screens. I beg some air.
We grab a cab, your kisses stir a song
that softens, spins the night into a blur.

When morning filters light through naked trees
I wake and wonder what—your voice, your hands,
your mouth?—has rendered me so much at ease.
You've held me all night long. I turn and land,

a laughing composition on the floor.
You draw me back in bed with you for more.

III

*Further study of the illustrative approach to life drawing,
employing chiaroscuro and introducing color.*

Maturity takes hold. We live our lives,
we have responsibilities. Let's sit
and drink, and talk awhile. It's Valentine's
Day, so I'm awash with mush. To wit:

the roses from a dear friend made me cry.
But you—oh, how that sweater holds your shape
with elegance, the green brings out your eyes!
This mix of dark and light is hard to take.

Resist the urge to storyboard in gray
the passion you won't let yourself indulge in.
You've pictured loving me and backed away—
it's not like choosing tempera or emulsion.

We drift homeward and pause to entertain
one kiss before we head off to our trains.

IV

A study of the fashion approach to life drawing, involving increasingly complex interactions of fashion concepts on the undraped figure. Expression, gesture, color, and pattern are examined in relation to backgrounds.

Fourth time around, we trade some memory scenes
that pop up from our youth in different cities.
The model who OD'd at seventeen
before you'd fucked or drawn her. Just as pretty,

my dreadlocked poet in vintage suits—he died,
I later learned, of AIDS. Boston, New York,
so much the same—wild parties we survived,
the scrapes that shaped us. Setting down your fork,

you reach out, almost touch me, stopping short.
I catch your eyes as they drift down from mine.
Your goodbye kiss so chaste—will we resort
to shaking hands when we link up next time?

Take my hand now, feel my blood warm your palm.
Come, take it. I can't hold this pose too long.