Dear Friends:

The Library takes great delight in loaning its treasures for others to see and enjoy. Our most recent loanee is from the darker side of our collections: a letter that 19th-century murderer William Burke wrote on the eve of his hanging for his brutal crimes of killing people to sell their bodies for dissection. The letter is on display in the exhibit "Anatomy: A Matter of Death and Life," which opened July 1 at the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh. The loan leads to this month's theme, bodies and anatomy.

Images from the Past:
"William Burke, the Murderer"
The "resurrectionist" William Burke is tagged "The Murderer" in this hand-colored 1829 engraving, while a similar image of his partner-in-crime, William Hare, is subtitled "King's Evidence." Burke was hanged, while Hare slunk away, never to be heard from again. These images are a part of the Library's digital collection "The Resurrectionists."

From the Collections:
Burke and Hare: The Resurrection Men
Noted Columbia University cultural historian Jacques Barzun (1907–2012) edited and provided an introduction to the Library's "Resurrectionists" collection, part of his continued fascination with the literature of crime and detective work. Burke and Hare: The Resurrection Men was published in 1974 as part of the Academy's History of Medicine series.

From the Blog:
"Library Loans"
We recently loaned William Burke's letter of January 27, 1829, to the National Museum of Scotland as part of their new anatomy exhibit. Here we explore the Library's program of loaning materials for exhibitions worldwide.

Virtual Visit:
"What Lies Beneath"
"What Lies Beneath," our November 2020 Virtual Visit (then under the series title "First Mondays at the NYAM Library"), explores our considerable collection of anatomy books, including Andreas Vesalius' landmark 1543 text De humani corporis fabrica (On the Structure of the Human Body).

Color Our Collections:
The Muscles of the Human Body
Published anatomies helped guide students and practitioners alike. This "muscle man" is from Myographia nova; or, A graphical description of all the muscles in the humane body (London, 1697) by anatomist John Browne (1642–1702), surgeon to King William III of England. We presented it in our 2020 coloring book. #ColorOurCollections gathers images from libraries, archives and museums from around the world.

Noted Elsewhere: "Cadaver Diaries, A Memoir"
The Library's first artist-in-residence, graphic artist and teacher Krista Willberg, recently published Cadaver Diaries, a memoir of death, art, healthcare, relationships, and, inevitably, bodies. See her blog and describing the project, "Graphic: Cadaver Diary, A Memoir" or Graphic Medicine.

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The New York Academy of Medicine

NYAM's work to ensure health for all is more critical than ever. Your support helps us preserve our Library's treasures, share them with researchers and the public, and safeguard the history of medicine to inform the future of health.

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