

## Text 12

Adam yawned, and looked at the clock above the entrance to the North Library. There was still a long time to go before his books would arrive, Everyone but himself seemed to be working with quiet concentration : you could almost hear a faint hum of cerebral flywheels and sporckets busily turning. Adam was seized by conflicting emotions of  
5 guilt , envy, frustration and revolt. Revolt won: this still repose, this physical restraint, was unnatural.

He fiddled idly with his pencil, trying to make it stand on end. He failed, and the pencil fell to the floor. He stooped cautiously to recover it, meeting, as he straightened up, the frown of a distracted reader. Adam frowned back. Why shouldn't he be distracted ?  
10 Distraction was as necessary to mental health as exercise to physical. It would be a good idea, in fact, if the Reading Roo were cleared twice a day, and all the scholars marched out to do physical jerks in the forecourt. No, that wouldn't do - he hated physical jerks himself. Suppose, instead, the circular floor of the Reading Room were like the revolve on a stage, and that every hour, on the hour, the Superintendent would throw the lever  
15 to set the whole thing in motion, sweeping the spoles on the desks round for a few exhilarating revolutions. Yes, and the desks would be mounted so as to go gently up and down like horses on a carousel. It wouldn't necessarily interrupt work - just give relief to the body cramped in the same position. Tone up the system. Encourage the circulation. He closed his eyes and indulged in a pleasing vision of the gay scene, as the floor  
20 rotated, and the scholars smiled with quiet pleasure at each other as their seats rose above the partitions, and gently sank again. Perhaps there might be tinkling music.

*David Lodge, The British Museum is Falling Down, 1965  
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