

The Man with  
Night Sweats

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## The Missing

Now as I watch the progress of the plague,  
The friends surrounding me fall sick, grow thin,  
And drop away. Bared, is my shape less vague  
– Sharply exposed and with a sculpted skin?

I do not like the statue's chill contour,  
Not nowadays. The warmth investing me  
Led outward through mind, limb, feeling, and more  
In an involved increasing family.

Contact of friend led to another friend,  
Supple entwinement through the living mass  
Which for all that I knew might have no end,  
Image of an unlimited embrace.

I did not just feel ease, though comfortable:  
Aggressive as in some ideal of sport,  
With ceaseless movement thrilling through the whole,  
Their push kept me as firm as their support.

But death – Their deaths have left me less defined:  
It was their pulsing presence made me clear.  
I borrowed from it, I was unconfined,  
Who tonight balance unsupported here,

Eyes glaring from raw marble, in a pose  
Languorously part-buried in the block,  
Shins perfect and no calves, as if I froze  
Between potential and a finished work.

– Abandoned incomplete, shape of a shape,  
In which exact detail shows the more strange,  
Trapped in unwholeness, I find no escape  
Back to the play of constant give and change.

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