



Meditation on the Treason of His Body

Bent over books of the economic and social development of Latin America, my brother is dying. I have only been once to see him, there in the gray light rushing like water down Arthur Avenue, down the throats and into the lungs of young men bending against the black stones of tenement houses. And there I saw his body turned on itself, insurrection of MS—left eye white and blinking, the hung flesh of his face, bird's legs and trembling hands. He is 24. He has gone gauzy in the light, his shadow on the sidewalk only half as black as mine. But in the evening, after we eat ravioli from the market and share a quart of beer, after he sets out a syringe and translucent vial of oily medicine, scrubs his pearl belly, and slips the needle in, little red bulb of skin in chemical blossom, he pulls his shirt back across his still wide shoulders and opens his book and studies.