

The Ecstasy of Saint Francis

And years later, watching *Angels in America*, I know your collapse at the end of our last evening walk was worthy of Prior Walter, and I wonder if Kushner had known you, my anonymous saint.

Today I imagine you as you were then, though cloaked, freshly fallen, an exemplary Assisi, ecstatic with Kaposi's stigmata. I imagine me there with you, performing my best seraphic pantomime. The chimeric dark of Central Park. I wonder if Caravaggio would have painted your autoimmune wounds had he known you, soon to be late, long before the decade ran out.

Thinking on that summer moment in the Park, your brief peace before coma, I wish this snapshot, this metastasis could have lasted.

Martha e3 Mary

It was all the dying
that kept us together until

we had to bear it separately
Lots of couples we knew

especially lesbians like us
came together because of

then got obliterated by
what we didn't know at the time

was a virus
What we did know at least

all of us who believed
was Bactrim

made effective prophylaxis
kept the purple plaques

at bay and any man with KS
was a time bomb

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My partner was about to
rehang the antique mirror

when I said
your brother will never leave this room again

she said I know and neither will
I said don't say it so she stood there holding

the mirror on the table
surveyed that small room

in our brownstone mausoleum
The curtains have remained open since he went

blind and the foundation
he could no longer apply on his own

The vanity where the mirror usually hung
drained of vanity since he began

sleeping all day I wondered how
she and I'd have survived

apart — me loving her through all that
death and her anchored to me for fear of

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But after her brother died
then his twice-widowed boyfriend

then the widower's drag mother
then the next then the next then the next

then nearly our whole network of gay family
then she said she could no longer survive

our grief together she said
it's time at last to leave the room