

## Missing People

Picture on the mantel,  
everyone apparently  
there  
in this posing nuclear  
unit,  
& its additions  
accepted:  
boyfriend, girl,  
the expected  
enlargements ex-  
cept , next  
to one son,  
the space is cropped  
in such a way  
another person fit,  
& there stands the  
invisible lover,  
the secret sharer, at  
home, uninvited  
because who else  
knows, would guess  
that the man is  
family,  
that the man has spent  
years  
looking in on, being  
private support.

Here's a different un-  
photographed image:  
Son in the hospital  
cities away,  
delirious speech, the  
bed sheets,  
an imagined rack,  
control growing desperate-

That guy is a doctor.  
I know by the coat,  
the stethoscope  
pocketed  
& they're shaking  
hands over me  
as if making a  
deal...my parents...as if ...

where is...Look, I can  
write checks, sign my name  
&... time I've been biding, I  
will buy, bring  
back...Jim...help.. Don't tell

I said, wrong stupid,  
denying,  
hiding

our life is out there  
in the distant open & yet  
...the mantel picture,  
the family portrait...wrong  
wrong because ...no  
skeleton...no closet...you're  
the person I confess to them  
now as the door, their  
handshake, words agree to seal  
over, against:

this Jim person,  
listen,  
don't you dare give  
admittance.