No propriety. The johnny-shirt tied loose as the slab underneath slides out and light hits unadjusted eyes. Thirty minutes is a long time to search for blight, nests of cerebellar locusts, the exact site of pestilence, and then to see vast, white emptiness outside. The machine sits and technicians, nametags attached, guide noninitiates—plebes who’ve seized, gone blind, or otherwise lost their sense—from the room. I’m exposed, in partial clothes, and barefoot identity’s more than the loss of health but also less—the business of symptoms and diagnosis, but also shivers to keep warm and ask the question: what’s next?

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