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JANUARY 17: ST. ANTONY'S DAY: LES FLAMMES

Cole Swenson

"There's a disease that eats up the limbs that feels like ants are eating them." (*St. Antoine! St. Antoine...*) and there was a disease that dried up the heart from the inside out, and another that began as spots of light on the skin that grew and grew and then enormously died. Did you notice that all the saints died, sometimes in droves, and there was a disease that made the body soar and one that made it disappear slowly, grain by grain while you watched.

(Fascinated. As in nailed to the spot.)

(When you can see right through the skull there's still time, but you

can't (as in entranced affixed)

There's a grave just large enough for the face.

And a tendency incessantly to walk back and forth

and another to arrive. And in the peripheral field, a sense of light that

you couldn't name. Like all things that

(all living takes place

just before the word

was said

was hidden (or slid, as into an envelope)

in fire or flood, but usually fire.