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A Short Play by
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THE AMERICAN

There's something about a list of names that makes me uneasy.

Together, so many names don't seem real.

Whether on a guest list or a seating chart or a wall—or a newspaper front page that continues on page 12, too many names together overwhelm me.

I've never been a numbers person. I can't walk into a room and tell you how wide it is or how many feet are between me and the door or how many bodies I see.

Bodies.

It boils down to bodies.

I am a body. You are a body. Your children, your mother, your cousin.

I'm reminded of that game we used to play in the car: hold your breath whenever you pass a cemetery. Bad luck if you don't, so when you see one coming, take a deep breath and hold—

Hold.

How long would we be holding our breaths if we held our breath for every last life extinguished by this virus?

How long would the world be silent, together, holding on...holding steady...waiting for the end?

THE AMERICAN takes a deep breath. Blackout.