



Close to Death: Poems

Patricia Smith

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Homicide, drug abuse, and AIDS-related deaths have forced black male life expectancy into a steady decline. In New York City, black males have long been considered expendable. Young men who feel they have run out of options, whose bravado indicates they are no longer afraid to die, wear baseball caps emblazoned with "C2D," for close to death. This chilling cry comes from those who expect to lose their lives violently without ever having a chance to live. *Close to Death*, a book of poems amplifying the voices and souls of black men at various stages of their lives, is a poetic requiem for those who struggle against the odds, for those who have resigned themselves to death, and for those already gone.

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