The letter is always a reminder of an absence that engenders and sustains the correspondence. This talk explores how Roman letter writers (Cicero, Seneca, Ovid) construct their epistolary addressee’s absence and their own presence on the page. The letter may be a reflection of the writer’s soul, a replacement for the writer’s physical body, or even a “real” trace (e.g. blood, tears) of the absent body. By reading these epistolary strategies through the lens of metonymy and synecdoche, we can differentiate between situations of amicitia or fraternal amor (usually presented through metonymy) and erotic amor (usually presented through synecdoche).