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Where He Fell

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Where He Fell

Susan R. Mardele

This morning I walked by the place
where he fell.

There is no longer any sign
of what happened in that place.

No bloodstain, no plastic or metal shards.
I know because I searched ...

For an indication that something
catastrophic happened ... where he fell.

The car that struck him drove off,
leaving him curled on his side in the street.

Snoring. I thought, oh, he's ok.
He's just knocked out.

Until the blood pooled behind his head,
staining the asphalt where he fell.

I was retained to talk to the police,
and he was flown to Parkland.

I'd never been through this before,
so I didn't realize the little room

I was ushered into meant something.
The young chaplain, the three doctors.

The words, "unrecoverable brain injury,"
return to haunt me ... where he fell.

It has been more than eight years,
yet the images are fresh in my memory.

It was such a huge thing in my life,
losing Steve.

It seems odd that there isn't
something marking the place where he fell.

At first, I relived the trauma
every time I passed the place.

It's only three blocks from my house.
I pass nearly every day.

I acknowledged the dark anniversaries.
First a week, then a month, then a year.

Now nearly a decade.

The long-stemmed roses disappeared,
so I left petals; they're harder to pick up.

Dropped like pools of blood,
affirming love and memory where he fell.

After a time,
I no longer left flowers.

Now I most often think with great gratitude
of the person I had in my life for a time.

But this morning, walking by,
I still searched for something other than memories ...

That remains ...
where he fell.