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A Love Poem for Alyce Husar

I am planting trees in my meadow. From over the hill I hear a chainsaw bite the morning, shrieking into an old oak in my neighbor’s woods. I cut my spade into the wet turf and lift a divot out to see the dear face of Alyce Husar like a sleeping toad’s in the mud where I had almost cut it in half, her eyes unsticking one at a time as her awareness rises.

At last she is able to focus on me—eighty years old—she says, “You’re going to be mad at me.”

I had smashed into her car with a force that drove her thirty feet, hit her broadside with my pickup when, with not a blink of caution, she’d pulled in front of me. In a final millisecond, my tires shrieking and biting, I managed to swerve enough to avoid crushing the door in on her body.

When I walked her to the shoulder out of traffic, her hand was chilled, yet her lovely pearl and gray patina was glazed and unblemished.
She said it again,
“You’re going to be mad at me.”
Then added, “A lot of people are.”

I admit I was furious—
but it was a furious love—
a love that visits me sometimes
still at odd, distracting moments,
when I am planting trees or reading,
a love so furious that I lied to her,
“How could I be mad at you?”
I told her. “I almost killed you.”