

The Fall

PETER SCHMITT

I could forget, in time, how a half-minute
sooner and I might be running in the rain
across the parking lot, catching his shoulders;
harder to banish is the terror, seen
through wipers, on his face just as he lost
his footing, right before head struck pavement;
and least likely to ever be erased
are his eyes, fixed and staring at the sky,
lips barely moving—breath steady but shallow—
as if tasting for the first time, or last,
the rain. Twelve minutes I knelt, my hand pressed
to his (his walker still clutched), then flashing lights...
Tattooed on his chest: *Do Not Resuscitate*
—words that forever now would come too late.