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West Meets East in Grace Beyond Belief

Mary Dengler

Accidents happen
because people act
on what they perceive
and believe to be.
I was walking through
a Vegas parking lot in late July.
My husband, Ed, who
walked ten feet behind,
was looking at the ground
or only me.

A car in backing up
had stopped to let me through.
But then assumption backed by reason
trumped the truth.
The driver thought
that I was on my own.
My husband thought
that he was safe in seeing me alone.
And I assumed the driver looked again
and saw us both.

But all of us were wrong.
She didn't look again before she surged.
He followed in my wake in faith
That Moses-like I'd lead him safely on;
I looked ahead, assured of human reckoning.

The car accelerated backward just
as Ed began to cross its path
still glancing down or straight ahead at me.
And I, half-turning to remark the heat,
was stricken mute, ahead in time,
assuming he was dead,
then gathered force in time to bellow "Stop!"

He heard and turned to face the missile
as it hit. The impact folded him in half
and carried him along before
the driver felt the gentle load and stopped,
allowing him to drop.

Belief now turned to faith. Had
she hit him sideways as he walked,
there would have been no folding
than the fold of broken bone. Instead
a car designed by Chung-ju Yung,
with South Korean drive,
had tackled with a Suma's strength
that folded him in half.

Like a tape rewinding, up he leaped
but shouted, "I'm okay"
at my unnecessary grief,
as death reversed to life.
Again, assumption, reason, fled
At grace beyond belief.