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Emery in repose

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Emery in repose

Cover Page Footnote

A special "thank you" to Peter Lichtenberg, Ph.D., ABPP, Wayne State University Institute of Gerontology and Jennifer Mendez, Ph.D., Wayne State University School of Medicine.

Emery in Repose

The ringing of the telephone
Triggered a sudden sense of unease
That had percolated, in wait,
Just below the surface

Emery, a retired high school mechanical drawing teacher
Was now in a four-bed ward of a nearly forgotten
Community hospital, tethered to a ventilator
After having been found in a supine position

Unresponsive and bleeding from the back of his head
Adjacent to his automobile
After having slipped and fallen on an ice-covered lot
Emery's three siblings, unable to conceal

Their contempt for their older brother
As they arrived at the hospital throughout the evening
Bound by duty and fueled with disdain. Why they appeared at all
Would remain an unsolved mystery

His siblings crossed the ward's well-worn threshold
Swallowing a simultaneous gasp
As Emery did not look like himself,
As best they could remember

Emery's appearance, at this juncture, reminded
His sisters and brother of their late father who
Had departed their lives long before
They had anticipated their emancipation

Emery had been given a grim prognosis based upon a diagnosis of
Respiratory Failure secondary to Congestive Heart Failure
And a subdural hematoma,
A clear indication of how deep into the abyss he had fallen

Emery had not abandoned his neighborhood,
Even though his former neighbors had quietly
And decisively left him behind with nothing
But a bitter recollection of memories and nostalgia

With no known subscribers, his family
Systematically gathered their belongings, then
Their possessions, and finally their composure
As the three of them exited the ICU

And crossed the parking lot where Emery had fallen without turning back