

Because

Because Susan wouldn't marry him
when they graduated from High School;

because he couldn't get that job
as an apprentice electrician;

because he decided to join the army instead;

because he wasn't killed in the war;

because he met Mary, a volunteer
at the hospital where they sent him for rehab;

because she didn't get pregnant
the first time they tried, but gave birth
ten months later to their daughter, Karen;

because Mary decided to go back to work at
the chemical plant as soon as she could;

because Karen chose not to attend the elite university
on the other side of the country
where she never would have met Bob;

because Bob took a different route home from work
one day and wasn't hit by the speeding truck;

because Mary was among the twenty percent or so for whom
surgery combined with radiation do not bring about a cure;

John sits here now, on the porch, watching his grandson
Christopher playing in the last rays of evening, weeping,
while Karen holds his hand.

Steve Bloom
July 2001