

## Sometimes You Get a Break

You might, for example,  
break your arm.

I did, and let me tell you:  
It will dominate your life  
for a while.

Consider the simple things  
like rolling over in bed,  
using a can opener,  
pulling up your pants  
in the morning.

Half a year later the brace  
that held my humerus in place  
and the sling  
have become artifacts,  
stashed now just in case (I guess)  
in a closet. I spy them

on occasion,  
and, on occasion too  
still feel a tightness, as if  
someone is wrapping the arm  
in an ace bandage. But  
there is no pain, no weakness,  
at least none caused

by my injury,  
no hesitation to undertake any task.  
Next week when I see  
the orthopedist—for what he and I  
both think is the last time—that visit  
will likely mark the final stage  
in my transition from initial crisis  
to memory.

As I compose these lines  
it even seems like a fond memory.  
(You are not the only one  
who is surprised by this.)

And yet, it isn't difficult, not  
if you consider the gentleness  
generated by remembering  
human beings who stayed with me  
on the trail  
after my fall, offering water  
a jacket to cushion my head,

encouragement until  
the rescue team arrived.  
The help and support  
from family and friends  
is likewise remembered,  
    of course,  
and yet it is mostly the total strangers  
who gave freely, thereby testifying  
to a side of our humanity  
which becomes visible to us only  
in moments of acute emergency.

And there is a fondness too  
    in remembering  
a successful struggle  
against adversity—once  
that struggle is in the past; indeed,  
it seems: almost as soon  
as it has become the past.  
(You are not,  
    the only one  
who is surprised by this.)

Steve Bloom  
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