

Luck

Casually, I was looking at my phone,
giving directions, when a rash of speed,
thwack, a white cloud
exploded on my left, gunpowder
smells filled the seats, and the car
was jaggging right left right
then juddering to a halt, and
we were both lashed
against seatbelts, at risk of
becoming statistics. Anna
got out, trembling,
I managed to unbuckle and somehow
cricked my bum onto her driver's seat
but no further; movement equalled agony.
The car was steaming, Anna worried
it would gush into flames, I was
ashen-faced but knew
none of this till later.
Then a voice at my ear
was asking my name, calling
an ambulance, giving details.

Even strangers are kind in a crisis.
Shock numbs pain; somehow the ambos
got me out. The rest of the day
was hospital, pain, tests, x-rays,
the same questions over and over again
to ensure you are alert, know your name
and where you are. Anna, caged
in a head brace, at one point
heard my voice
on an opposite hospital bed
as we were wheeled through the system.

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Now, where her chest hit
the steering wheel, and my fractured ribs,
front and back, are slowly healing.
There's nothing like the rigmarole
of insurance claims and police reports,
along with pain, to demonstrate
what you did survive, and to show
over how many things we have no control
and to see, to sense, to speak, to breathe
is one-quarter choice, three-quarters chance.

DENNIS HASKELL