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## It Happened in an Instant

Doretta Diekman Anema

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# It Happened in an Instant

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*Doretta Diekman Anema* — (B.A. Calvin College; M.A. University of Nevada, Las Vegas), Executive Director, *No More Sidelines*, Kent County, MI.

It was a hot July night  
the band was ready to play  
    cables and cords all set in place  
        speakers ready to send out shock waves  
jaunty ripples of Jazz to a crowd on the lawn  
When I saw a shuttle bus swing ‘round  
    off the drive, into the “Handicapped” zone  
        halting  
            new to the role  
            not sure how to navigate  
                the narrow  
                tricky  
                lane.

I waved the driver through and we got things turned around  
the motorized passenger lowered down  
    rolled off the metal lift  
        tires testing soft grass  
someone drove his chair for him, out of the sun, into the shade  
    amidst music  
        loving  
            people  
                talking  
amidst dance  
    loving  
        children  
            laughing  
everyone waiting...  
    for the sea of sound  
        to break the dam  
            wash over them  
                drown them out  
                beat the heat  
                with bass and drums and wind and brass  
                Spiritual Immersion  
                complete.

When the service concluded, I brought out the dogs  
to please the horde of eager petting hands  
    “Can you come to the chair...  
    bring one to my brother-in-law, Tim?”

Of course! I ambled over with ease,  
Derk prancing at the end of the leash  
flagging high his bushy tail  
rubbing his head all over the chair,

and him,

“Tim, can you pet him?” She lovingly asked.  
His whisper, “I just can’t do it...,” lingered long in the evening air.  
And that was when it happened,  
like the green flash of the sinking Sun  
a glint, a glimmer of something Eternal  
Ethereal shimmering

World Beyond  
senses and flesh

For just an Instant  
I caught this man’s eye  
sight penetrating through smokey sun-glasses  
past struggling lips and body-usurping ALS  
he was passionately alive  
keen insights whirling inside  
a vibrant soul  
speaking  
volumes  
to me.

Days later, eating tacos at their house,  
extended family present  
our stories unraveled  
gathered in heaps upon the floor  
inevitably intermingling  
questions  
tears  
Amens ....  
freely falling from our parched tongues  
assuaging, slaking for a day  
the dry and dusty struggle of our paths  
exposing all our aching  
gently pulling at the threads  
that held our broken hearts  
weaving my sorrow  
into the very fibers of their own  
grief  
bone and marrow knit  
secure

I became one of them  
    a kindred spirit,  
    Green Gable-like  
    John Donne-like  
    Holy Spirit-like

Then something so familiar in his face  
    I thought I saw from long ago,  
    but couldn't place  
    "Tim, Didn't we overlap at Calvin...?"  
    English major (like me)  
    Class of '89 (that's mine)  
sitting together in lecture halls of 25  
    just kids  
pondering the complexity of poets' lives  
    ages past  
    and the majesty  
    of poetry

Now, thirty toilsome years gone by, we are pondering the complexity of our own  
lives

    seasoned writers  
        trying to speak poetically  
        wisely, delicately  
about difficult, painful things  
    sitting face to face  
    sharing divinely prepared space  
        grappling with the severe Mercy  
    of God's Grace  
        somehow mysteriously deeply tied  
        trusting each other  
        eye to eye  
            as if from Forever ago....

...but I know, it all happened in an Instant.