

Shards

Your younger son, at seven, trod on shards—
A Molson bottle that some passing lout
Had shattered on the pavement by your yard.
You said, "Be brave." He didn't weep or gripe,
And even when the bandages that wrapped
His flesh went sopping red and smeared the car,
He kept a stoic silence to ER
And back. But anaesthetic does come out.

That night, his whimpering was hell to hear,
A venom slipped into your drowsing ear.
Nightmares rewound the decades, took you back
To slivers that you never did extract.
The point intrudes, the broken vessel bleeds,
And still more shards lie hidden in the weeds.

PETER NORMAN