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Scotty--a Sestina (almost)

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Ben Nystrom  Scotty—a Sestina (almost)

He was always full of energy.
Friendly, outgoing, forever fast
talking. Shaking your reluctant hand
fifteen, twenty times, coming and going,
slapping your half of his last two cigarettes,
asking if you'd like to get drunk.

Dangerously impulsive: exploding when he was drunk.
He sprinted blindly across the street, humoring his energy
level on the way to get cigarettes,
then recrossed with an equally nonchalant fast
pace. He returned safely, but Scotty, always going
and coming, only had time to shake my hand
before he was reminded by his empty hand
that his bottle of wine was across the street. He was drunk
enough to care for a couple of swigs, going
warm and diluted by backwash. Focusing his energy
on his forgetfulness, rather than the van going too fast,
he bolted into an obvious collision. Although his cigarettes
were uncrushed, I offered him my last cigarette.
His shocked, trembling hand
was too weak to go digging pockets. As fast
as a crowd gathered, Scotty proved how drunk
they made him. Speaking with unbeaten energy.
"Now I know what a deer feels like." He was going
to be all right. He was still going
to be the same old Scotty, "Hey Benny. You got a cigarette?
What a great way to get attention." Feeding his energy
off their laughter and spectacle, he lifted a scraped hand.
"Tell the lady that hit me," commanded the slurried drunk,
"that it wasn't her fault." He always spoke too fast.

I told him I couldn't see. Maybe I spoke too fast.
"But she was drinking," he hinted. "and she was going
over the speed limit." If she was drunk
it didn't matter. I didn't lie for money. "Cigarette?"
he asked. As always, I set out my hand
and sat. smoking in quiet, uneasy admiration of his energy.

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