

# Selected Poems

BRIAN DOYLE

## Crash

There was a moment after the horrific car crash that I wish to tell you about.  
It wasn't the crash itself, which occurred because of the usual greed for time,  
Because a guy pulled out when he shouldn't have and then there was blood,  
And it wasn't the long moments after, when things slowly kept on happening,  
A tall calm guy on his cellphone calling the cops, a woman crying in her car,  
Smoke drifting, one of the drivers moaning, glass everywhere it shouldn't be,  
Soon enough the approaching demanding wail of cop cars and the ambulance,  
The first impatient honk of a driver stuck a few cars behind where they can't see  
What happened or hear the guy moaning or see the woman sobbing in her car,  
The first car inching past the broken smoking cars, the driver reluctant, but he  
Has got to get to work, man, there's nothing he can do, someone called a cop.  
No, we know those moments, we have all seen those moments, we have been  
*In* those moments, God help us, and we have each and every one of us driven  
Through the shatter and the smoke, past the moaning and weeping and shock,  
But there was something about the first minute after the crash that haunts me  
To the point where I have to write it down even though I know I am not good  
Enough to catch the shiver of it, the tremble, the way everyone within earshot  
Stopped whatever momentous or thoughtless or normal thing they were doing  
And focused on who among us was hurt, paid the most ferocious attention for  
Once not to who we are and what we do, but who *they* are and what *they* did,  
Or what was done upon them. I swerved out of the way, shocked and cursing  
Like everyone else, but as I sat there, rattled and thinking my back was busted  
This time for sure, I saw four people jump out of their cars and run like crazy  
To where there was pain. All the rest of the day I've smelled shame and hope.