

anne sheldon

*Monday Morning*

An old black man lies in the curving road.  
He stirs, he wants to go; he isn't dead.  
Be still, you say, you're bleeding from your hair.

He sits — don't let him sit — beside the road  
and reaches slowly back behind his head,  
holds his weathered palm up flat and stares.

Around the blue-black nubbles of the road,  
in the creases of his hand, the stain is red;  
wet and dark, the cushion of his hair.

He tries to tie his shoe, looks up the road.  
No hit and run... should have stayed in bed...  
Slipped at home and fell right down the stairs...

Car door slammed and pitched me in the road...  
No one's fault, he says, I cracked my head.  
He reaches back again and strokes his hair.

The little bright canals upon the road  
are someone's fault. Now his shoes are red,  
he starts to weep. Nearby a siren blares.  
Let me go home. I remember what he said.