

## The Rescue

When the old tourist collapsed  
at the Smithsonian metro stop,  
it must have been a terrifying descent:

tumbling down the escalator, backwards,  
hat flown off and white hair flowing,  
hurtling toward a harrowing crash.

But we all leapt forward: commuters  
with our bags and backpacks flailing;  
we rushed up to him like a mighty wave.

Absorbing the shock of a falling body,  
grasping for moving handrails,  
fighting for footholds in the sharp staircase,

we interrupted fate. He stopped;  
strangers still clung to each other,  
as the old man, shaking, regained his balance.

Thank you, he mouthed, a bruise  
slowly darkening his temple. We breathed,  
and raised him up like an obelisk.