My First Patient With Alzheimer's

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When I forget where I left the keys
I think of him—his silver hair,
thick hands worthy of Rome’s colosseum,
back straight despite the weight of his history,
gun-metal blue eyes refusing to cloud over.
       His crumbling memory.

My January yard is in a hard-frost coma.
Colorless clouds defeat the thin sun.
I can forget this day. Unlike the days
he could not forget.
He forgot how to spell *sniper*
but he never forgot what he left behind
when he came home from Korea—
the shot, the double echo, the spent
shell casing hot as his completed violence,
then nothing but sighs of pine-sieved wind.

West of me a soft mist—not gray, not blue—
rises from ochre hills. I am aging.
Time to make a memory. Perhaps a trip this April.
He called the cherry blossom season in Seoul
unforgettable.
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