

## How many times

How many times over the years have I thanked God  
that I had the courage to tell you it was over?  
How many times over the years have I thanked God  
that I'd realized I was so much better than to settle for you?

To be honest, I'd lost count.  
But lately?

Your face and your smile hadn't come to mind  
in at least a couple of decades.  
I quit wasting energy on sighs over our time together  
I stopped tallying up regrets for the time we shared.

Out of sight, out of mind, and I hadn't minded one bit.

Then a name caught my eye today, your name.  
It was an obituary nearly three years old.  
I hesitated to read it, because in my mind,  
you've always been that twenty-something guy,  
jacket slung over your shoulder, walking down my driveway.  
You were the one I watched leave my life, "for better," I always said.

But read it I did, then twice, and again.  
You'd married once, just once, and stayed together all these years.  
Career military until injured and retired, you had children,  
you were well-known in the community for working with youth,  
and dozens of foster kids called you "Dad."

My eyes brimmed with tears, not for you,  
that guy who'd walked down my driveway,  
leaving my life, thank God, for good,  
But for this amazing stranger you'd become,  
the good you'd done, the love you'd shared,  
with family, friends, community, and country.

We'd have never been able to live this life of yours together.  
This incredible life never even crossed our radar.  
I thank God you had the good sense to not look back  
(And – I suspect – you did some thanking of your own).