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April 30, 2018

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A few years back I gave myself permission to get angry at other drivers. I allowed myself to call them names and take personal offense at their bad behavior. A friend had often urged driving with forgiveness and, on a dark and rainy night when I shocked myself at how mad I was at some unknown and seemingly very confused person, I resolved to withdraw that permission to myself to rage and fume.

Not so easily done, and yet within six months I was back to my old equanimous self, with, perhaps, a little more humility and understanding of human frailty. All well and good.

So the other day, I was driving with Roberta, the sister I live with, on an ordinary broad street in St. Louis when a car whizzed up from behind, passed us on the right, cut in front, veered into the left lane and cut in front of yet another car, the one in front of us in the middle lane.

"Shock and awe," Roberta said.

We laughed and laughed. "Shock and awe" is a bit of a prayer, not exactly forgiving but lifting one's heart and mind above the mundane, marveling at what these humans God has made can dare to do.

So now I not only forgive. I laugh, expressing a little reckless hope that we all will be able to survive ourselves.

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