



## **DEAD END**

*By Ben Amato*

He didn't know where he was or what time it was. All he knew was that he was walking. And from the way he felt he had been walking for a long time.

As if awakened from a deep sleep, he took a quick look around. On his left, traffic roared by on a very busy highway. On the right was a huge, brick concrete wall. He was on the emergency lane of the Cross Bronx Expressway.

He was exhausted. Bone tired. Legs numb. Every muscle screamed with pain but his brain was way too dead to hear them.

He had no idea where he was going. He just staggered forward. Cars and trucks raced by, just inches away. A huge bus just missed him and left him swaying in a wake of thick, black exhaust. The foul smell triggered something in his mind and he remembered.

There was the tearing sound of screeching brakes and he fell off the back seat. He heard screams; saw flames and then nothing as smoke filled the car. Small kernels of glass covered the car's interior. All the windows shattered on impact.

The kids were trapped, their legs pinned between the back and front seats. Dad was slumped over the steering wheel. Mom was gone, having been thrown through the windshield.

The gas tank exploded and a wave of flames blew him over the seats and out the window. He slid off the twisted hood, fell to the pavement and saw the entire car awash with fire.

Everyone he knew, everyone he loved was lost. He was alone. The searing heat forced him to turn away and he began to walk.

Minutes, hours, miles meant nothing to him as he slowly walked. The emergency lane began to get smaller and the roaring traffic came closer and closer. He raised his head for the first time and saw the lane end in a towering brick wall.

He looked right and saw a huge wall. To his left was the constant blur of traffic. Behind him were twisted metal, piles of ash and a past that no longer existed. Ahead there was nothing.

He paused for a moment and then stepped to his left and immediately entered traffic. A blue car swerved, a red one skidded but the 18-wheeler behind him barreled straight ahead. A dull, muffled thud was all that was heard.

The truck driver could not believe how the dog just stood there, as if he wanted to get hit. Dogs can't commit suicide. Can they?