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Road

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The Road

by John Van Rys

Hooves electric on asphalt—
dawn's three deer
on interstate 69.

o i know
it's a cliché—deer at dawn
like beer and football and boobs
like barbie and ken, copyright
Mattel Inc., and as American—
spare me.

White tails proliferate parks, farms,
big screens and beds—bambi,
a child's voice in deer's clothing, stuffed,
machine washable.

o i know:
the native way of life—arrows
in the throat, buckskin, bone tools:
Daniel Boone, hunting season's
genesis, boys become men
and deer cling to swerving hoods:
biologists cull herds
to enact the law
of negative population growth.

But alive
three deer were throbbing
capillaries, tightened sinews, vaulting
muscles—their leaping flesh
liquid loops of flowing umber,
orange-brown in dawn light, fire
from earth to air and back to dust.

Inside Out

by John Van Dyke

Where in the world does one locate a soul?
bedroom, bedroom, in back alley—church pew
perhaps? Can one compare them—many, few,
enough? Is each buried deep, a blind model?
What is it? animal, vegetable, mineral?
body-lined space? the answer? A clue
means from heaven, please. Does it rise like dew
at dawn, quenching, or burn the tongue a seal?

yes! the fence made,
it quivers and shrinks
beneath them!

This dawn no 18 wheels
nor penetrating shell
nor fractured bone slows
the flow.

900 miles later—38 thumped and bloody
coons, 12 lingering and degutted skunks
and 1 grounded eagle—pulp
but for three feathers
fanned to mute protest
by metal breezes
disturbing crows—
three deer still (charged
with trespassing)
vault my fences.

o i know!
my heart pants for them
as a charged cloud longs
for the unsplintered branch.