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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.
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.