

Matthew's Doe

Brown softness, warmth's furry coat,
her nostrils sniffing and fogging,
sensing bones frozen with pain
like I was one of her own, fawn-sized
for the flanks settling down, belly-close
as if to show there was nothing more
to be afraid of despite the lonely night's
black length, and strange frigid numbness
my wrists knew as burning rope.

Perhaps the post I was tied to
reminded her of some similar sight:
distant buck of hoisted girth
behind a barn through fields deathly still.

Suddenly would come the scent of that
even as breeze yet stirred the wheat,
breeze as a messenger for the iron blood smell.

My hunters left me to be carrion for crows,
not finishing the job mercifully, not at all efficient,
even if taking my shoes for chill to grip me with its vice,
until her shape drew off the raw pall.

How such shelter can be consoling kindness
even when just innocent animal instinct,
the other side of what evil men do.

That's why there were clear tracks under my eyes
where blood stains dried and darker bruises welled.

She left me way past daybreak, mama,
when the uniformed one came
taking her place
for the long voyage back home.