

Deer, Dear

I saw a fawn running across the grass
 what did he think he would find here?
I was wondering the same thing for myself. I was
waiting for my mother to come bounding after me,
 my white spots blazing: pieces of the wind themselves,
waiting for her head to touch my side, doe to child.

Two deer, loving in the low light.

On the phone, you tell me something I need to hear
in a voice I would recognize through the
fuzzy window pane of a yellow city skyscraper or
 on the other end of these spaces I am finding for the first time or
below sun-bled water, in space, under the pressing sheet of night.

I say bless you to the girl I pass on the sidewalk, while
angling my way to you against the drum of my ear, I hold the
receiver away from my mouth; I don't know if you heard me.
She says thank you and I realize you only get the part of my life
loud enough to translate over speakers.

Once I heard an obnoxious, full throated singer on your end,
even the echo of his voice off concrete and foot traffic and a smaller sky.
 More intimate, hearing your surroundings this way. What was meant
to be just yours, now also mine.

Time is our ceaseless choice, my hand hurting, your hand hurting
 Notebook propped on my knee, open on your tiny desk with my photo
 floating above, a birthday cigarette forever being lit.
There is a world in which we never smoked it,

in this world I get to close my eyes
the way you do when you inhale hand rolled tobacco
 when I open them you'll be across from me, again.

This morning, I saw the baby deer but no doe mother.
 Spots gone, replaced by sure, straight color.
I want the minutes to tick on.

His alabaster antlers: thick, bony and askew,
an unbalanced crown. He is king of his youth.

Every hour, the clock bells ring, sometimes loud enough to be yours,
sometimes just mine. Midnight and the sound scares him away,
I watch his flank disappear and wait for you to call me back.