

A version of this poem appeared in [Peripheries](#) (no. 3)

Of Deer

The brain is hot tonight. Yes, hot. Water steams against its surface, rising in animal shapes: The vibration of a hummingbird wing, the wing of a bat drummed tight, a deer rasping the dead velvet of his antlers against a tree. On a twilight hill we eye each other warily. The deer is scraping his antlers and will not stop. The abraded trunk shows raw wood; the splintered bark is in a pile. Velvet gone, he grates down the strong bone of his antlers, smoothing the points into nubs. There's something coming for him. Something, too, will come for me. He rubs until there's only fur over skull. The rack in shards. The tree thin, exposed.

A version of this poem appeared in [*The Lincoln Review*](#) (2021)

As If

Limbs elongated
to the point of illusion,

a woman is fashioned
into a line. She rises above me,

with all the grace of her geometry.
The pitted marks in the bronze

seem intimate—every surface dimpled
by a fingerprint. I carry her image

in my mind, touching her metal flesh
to mesh her skin and mine. Years later,

I see another sculpture by Giacometti:
A smooth, writhing bug splayed open at the neck. *Woman*

with Her Throat Cut. Femme égorgée. Woman
with her spine arched, woman

with her legs bent, split as if giving birth, woman
with her head thrown back, mouth open

as if she could be laughing,
as if I wouldn't flinch.

A version of this poem appeared in [*Cream City Review*](#) (issue 45.1)

Pig Woman

A blur of soft pink shaped
into a woman's profile/the nebulous bulk
of a Rorschach swine. The red-brown background
is her hair/the pig's dirt home. Lips,
breasts, hands folded at rest. A pair
of hooves and a vestigial tail. I stare
at the place where an eye
should be, burdening the blank
face with my human
secrets, my unending fleshly worries.
Pig Woman has it good—2-D
and unconscious—what I wouldn't give:
my twisted teeth, my regrets, my body
bent on death. House me in a beastly
form. Let me wallow in a molding apple,
its sickly juice, and between my jaws:
animal joy without omen of my own
spoiling. Goodbye to this upright
skeleton, to its coarsening and its pains.
I'll remain a pale smear, encased
within a white pine frame.