

County Road Twenty-Two

Sarah Golden

I remember where I was;
(It seems an obvious statement to make)
Behind the wheel, of course,
Left hand desperately
Fumbling for the switch
To turn on the high-beam headlights
In my late grandfather's light green Ford Taurus.
I don't usually drive it.
I don't know all the controls yet,
Like how you have to push
Like you mean it
Just to get the turn signal to cooperate.
It can smell fear.

I wasn't going more than 45, maybe 46?
When suddenly a
Single mother and her child, not quite a fawn anymore
Decided they just couldn't wait another second
To cross the asphalt, so they
Went
right

then
"Brakebrakebrakebrake"
My mother strained, bracing herself.
My foot slammed the brake quickly but with a slight
Hesitation, I didn't want to hurt
Mother or child
On either side of the cold glass and unfeeling metal.

The younger deer collided with the grill and fender
And stumbled off into the ditch.
The mother just kept on
Going and not stopping,
Letting the silvery darkness envelop her
Like a shock blanket
For the trauma victim.

I don't know how I kept so calm.
Mom called the Sheriff,
Spoke to him when he arrived;
I just stared straight ahead
Only turning
Slightly to answer questions
And see if I could crane my neck
Just enough
To glimpse the damage I had done
To the now-corpse in the dusky ditch.

I hope she did not suffer
If she even was a she at all.
I think of that deer every
Now and again.
I hope that her mother forgives me.
But most of all I hope that
In her last moments
She was able to see the stars.

Sarah Golden is a junior studying accountancy and human resources management. In the rare instance where she isn't running from one of her many weekly Dungeons & Dragons games to the next, she enjoys collecting uniquely shaped earrings, playing board games, and spoiling her roommate's cat.