

Half A Deer

Half a deer lay on the sloping grass.
Before we saw it we knew it was there
like something thrown at us: not seen yet
we felt it coming.

We see death often in the woods
but usually it doesn't look so
incorrect: the pink-red rib cage
with a big wedge of fur missing,
and clumps of hair, and violent holes in the mud.

We couldn't find the rest of the body—
only the rib cage up
remained slanted against the wind.
The skull was missing too,
although what looked like an old face
lay flat in the weeds;
without its shell, a mess of brain
black and gummy in the open sun.

Few of the trees were green yet;
all the undergrowth was grey and clotted.
Ahead, a big log lay across our path
smashed into short, thick segments.
A white oval in the bark
showed from which tree it came.

We eased down the slope,
to try and pick up the path we left.