

*interlude on the side of the road*

i met you afterwards and told you about what happened, our hands pressed to one another beside a pot of chamomile tea, several pastries. we went back to pick his body up. it was your idea, i hadn't thought of it. but as soon as you said it i felt resigned, something like fate. there are a few ways to process death. poems and flesh. round it out.

we were stroking his soft ears on the side of the road, dark and raining, when the big truck big man little hat pulled to a fast stop in front of us, hopped out, asked us

if we needed help if we hit the deer what we were doing?

we told him that we didn't need help, that we were only deciding what to do. murmured that we might harvest him.

the man                      grabs deer  
fistful of fur on top of head, and  
yanks upwards, shakes deer head.  
he lets go                      and  
   the head of the deer  
slams back to the side of the road.

yeah, there's some good meat on there,              i'd harvest that

and i'm starting to say *please don't touch him like that* when you  
(smarter) say (louder) *yes thank you*

*please don't touch like that    yes thank you please don't touch like  
that yes                      thank you please don't touch like that yes thank  
you please don't touch like that yes thank you please                      don't  
touch like that yes thank you please don't yes thank you                      please*

it's dark raining we are standing on the side of the road next to this man who has expressed a familiarity with death and i'm mad at myself for my outburst and i'm mad at the man for the way he touched this deer.

it was generous, maybe, his stopping. but even when the man tries to help, his body near ours feels like a threat

i'm scared of him, and guilty for my fear.

it is complicated. death and small town. big trucks and the men that drive them. you are this beautiful person beside me and my fear for your safety is in my throat. my inexperience is loud, and next to you. i don't want to put you in danger. the man jumps back in his truck and is gone.

we can't leave this deer on the side of the road, to be touched by any hands but ours. i saw him die he's my responsibility.

we are trembling as we lift leonard's body into the car. you drag smoke through a cigarette in the rain.