

Deer at Rest

Driving home near dusk this evening after visiting hours at the eating disorders clinic where I've incarcerated my daughter in hopes of keeping her alive, I passed something on the side of the road that nearly killed me. On the fast lane shoulder, up against the median, where the asphalt still held the sun's heat, a mother deer lay spooned around her baby, the two of them contented as cats, and my heart broke the way a mother's does at such sights, but then instantly seized with fear as I imagined the moment when, the ground grown cold, the deer would stand, stretch their spindly limbs, and start across the road for the forest. I felt the flash of brights, the frozen terror, the godawful, irretrievable impact.

And then I realized it had happened already. I didn't have to look in my rearview mirror to know, now, that those rested deer lay in a pool of their own blood, intestines stretched behind them, baking into the highway asphalt, and I cut across two lanes of traffic to the slow shoulder, my stomach heaving, and managed to punch on my hazards before the sobs took over my body, overtook the hazard's metronome and then drowned it out entirely as I wept onto my steering wheel for the cursed, blessed luck of that mother and that child to at least have died together.

Thisbe Nissen *is author of two novels, The Good People of New York, and Osprey Island; a story collection, Out of the Girls' Room and into the Night; and co-author/co-collagist of The Ex-Boyfriend Cookbook. She teaches Creative Writing at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, and has recently published short-shorts in NANO Fiction, Quick Fiction, and TriQuarterly Online.*