

The Fawn

We walked to the far edge of the property, where the new grass was shaded,
and found a fawn laying on its side as if asleep, surrounded by hoof prints in the soil.
Small, even for a fawn, it must have been stillborn, in every way perfect except for its size.
The mother, surely hoping to wake her, had cleaned every bit of her baby,
but her sleeping eyes never woke, tiny mouth never suckled, graceful legs never stood.

We found a quiet corner near the stone wall, where moist soil was rich and yielding,
made a grave, then rested the fawn inside,
folding her limbs as if in stride, covered her gently,
laid heavy stones to prevent predation, allowing the earth to reclaim her in peace.

What was it that killed the fawn, I wondered.
Was it heat of summer? The full buck moon? Distant fireworks?
Had she had been conceived too late in the season?
Likely I will never know.

The following day a doe visited the yard and stayed a while, looking, only looking.
She seemed to be searching for the fawn, to find some trace of it,
that if by some miracle it had survived, or perhaps to mourn.

I wanted to show her where the fawn lay now, beneath the soil,
that she would come to no more harm, and to help her mourn.
But we could only exchange glances, and
neither of us finding answers, we went our separate ways.