

Norm Levine

DEER OF DENMAN ISLAND

The big buck waited for his cue
behind a curtain of incremental green,
listened for our motor's purr,
the wiper's metronome.

We had seen the yellow signs
along the road, half caution, half ads,
but after all the no-shows
put him out of mind.

Winding through the rain forest
the talk went to musicals,
Kelly and Astaire. The one
joyously drenched, owned the street.
While the other, slender and tailed
went cheek to cheek with hat rack and broom.
God knows, with cameras, anything goes,
up walls and ceilings, on his toes.

The highway, after all,
was nothing more than a clear-cut path
of severed stumps and roots
paved for predators like us.

As we took the curve,
our Klieg lights in his eyes,
he choreographed his leap
reminding us whose woods these are.

A second had been split by screech
and balletic flight. There would be
no zooming in, no other takes.
He vaulted weightlessly without a trace.

MOVIE-SMART

Those of us who were suckled
on old movies learned by eleven
what makes the world tick.
We could spot the soldier scripted to take a bullet as he started to talk

about the deli he dreamed of opening
when he got back to Brooklyn.

We knew the earrings were a clue
when the camera zoomed in on them
and who the killer was when
he hesitated in his alibi.
We could tell the dirty double-crosser
from the honest sucker
by his moustache alone.

Damn, we were smart!
We learned how to almost kiss,
with our mouths closed,
that most people wore tux,
and the long arm of the law
would set the world right.

When we got out into the mean streets
just a bit unprepared for the grime and grit,
the grapefruits pushed in our face
we remembered what Tarzan said to Jane,
"It's a jungle out there" and that's when
our skin grew its necessary fur.