

YIELDING THE RIGHT OF WAY—MARYLIN NEASE—TEXAS

“Look!
Straight ahead!”
My sister commands,
Whispering,
Her hand urgent on my arm.
I stop and
Wonder why we’ve halted
Our morning trek
Through the wooded park.

Seconds pass.
Then, I see
A doe beside the road,
Watching, ears erect,
Deciding whether to cross or flee.

Seconds tiptoe.
Doe waits.

Like phantoms materializing from air,
Two more does
Step forward and join the first.
Next, two fawns
Prance out from camouflaging shadows,
One fawn with spots of cream on its coat.

We freeze.
Like mannequins in a store window,
Two human sisters,
One deer family of five.

I,
Slow motion,
Inch
My camera
From its case.

I peer through the lens,
And they peer back,
Each daring the other to move.

The deer move first,
Begin to cross the road,
Single-file,
Making their way
To a sun-and-tree dappled meadow.

From the east a car approaches,
Slows,
Stops,
Its humans,
Deer-struck.

Sensing the stage and audience are theirs,
The deer play their roles,
Continue crossing.

From the west,
A second car enters the theater,
Silently,
Captivated.

Seconds pass.
Drama ends,
Curtain falls,
Houselights rise,
Audience,
On foot and in cars,
Return to senses.

Seconds later,
Pictures now stored in camera
And in memory’s imagination,
Life begins anew:
Walkers and drivers resume journeys,
The same as before,
Yet changed in some subtle way—
By yielding the right of way
To deer at a crossing,
To deer now meadow-dancing,
Sun and shade dappling ears and faces,
Tails bouncing as they romp.