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## Stem

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## Dramatic Monologue as Beatriz Ferreyra

This is some decomposed music. This  
is some double. O great

and terrible pressing! Submerged  
in the memoriam swamps

I want to catch your thin neck full  
bodied breath in the blue

funeral vase, your death  
masked. This is like that

satanist music where they  
play it backwards. So I've heard.

## On a List of Games That Buddha Would Not Play, Number 1 [He Abstains from Robbery]

Once I watched a screen-ready trilogy  
of deer graze my front yard

in Iowa, only by the blobbed bulbs  
of their eyes in the dark.

In the dark, our eyes have the rods to see  
only in black and white.

A triad: a father, son, and some  
downed spirit. Forgiven in trespass.

I need to stress  
the pacifist element here.

I did not see the deer frozen  
in the middle of the road

nor strike one with my car  
because I am not a white poet

writing about the same deer  
for two centuries.

Even if I had struck, my car is not  
a Volvo, evolved to survive

striking a full-grown moose,  
ramming its legs full-speed

and getting crushed by its body, for  
Swedish and Canadian drivers

only. For even if I had killed it,  
my non-existent gun is not

a Glock, intelligently designed to fire even  
if the muzzle

is stuffed with sand. That's only "merciful  
bullet" in McGuffin.

You share your hazing rituals  
about panicking and grabbing

a picnicking doe, set  
in concrete. A kettlebell of a deer,

when the ask was to bring back gnomes.  
True story, staggering

as Sisyphus under his boulder of faith  
in privilege. The most stressed

test: where to leave the carcass  
in the dark frat-house basement. How to care for

the metallic scratches it left on your brother's car.  
Which mechanisms are built to survive.

Here we go, you'll say, the race card  
I've never played. Here's to the poem of gray areas

I've never written. Here  
we've bitten the bullet.

## Need

Your right knee is a haunted staircase.  
Your left is a spring-breaking

island. Your knee is a moving  
snowplow. Your kneecap is a Mona Lisa

fridge magnet. Your knee linkage  
unlike a shrimp tail.

Your leg skin is an ice-ray  
Chinese lattice design. Recursive shape

grammar. Your left  
kneecap is the black leather Star

Wars helmeted special edition  
Mr. Potato Head. The antihero. The reflex.

Hammer it and the knee's ear falls off  
to no response. There, there—