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the animals I see when driving towards a small town

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the animals I see when driving towards a small town

by Emily Carnevale

the deer:

he's on his back,
the white belly like a flag.
his thin legs cracked
and bent like dead branches
after a storm.

the raccoon:

flattened, thrown
to the rumble strips
on the road that remind
us of the long stretches
of night ahead.

the mystery:

I wonder who you were,
black fur and flattened paws,
before your end, in the same way
others will wonder who I was
before they drive away.