

Small Deer in Early March

I watched a small deer standing deep in snow
on a bank across our frozen lake,
and worried myself at how this late in winter
it could ever come to new forage,

or the straw bales hunters might leave in a field.
It's hard to think of deer
as beautiful, when I know how needy they are,
and hard to be thoughtful,

without becoming caught inside the hunger of it.
I watched the deer stop still,
looking first toward the lake, then up the slope.
At once, it leaped over snow

among bare trees, sprinted down a campus road
with its white scut held high,
and I was left standing at the window
with a feeling of panic that I couldn't put down.