

DEIRDRE DWYER

## The Calling

I was late for a reading  
because I waited for your call—  
lovely anticipation  
of tender words.

I put the receiver back in its cradle  
after we talked,  
dashed off into the night  
but the construction site behind  
my residence caught me  
like a trap that clamps onto the leg  
of an animal we cherish  
for its skin.

I slowed down, not wanting to fall  
into the hole in the ground  
ribboned with concrete.

I wanted to walk further away  
from its edge, but the path followed close  
and I was still eager to hear the voices  
of my own kind,  
voices that help me  
know my own kind.  
I threaded through the trees,  
felt like I was rushing  
in slow motion there  
when I heard the grass  
under some moving thing.

I turned to find a young deer.  
I stopped.

Thought I should think like a deer.  
Try to. I know it didn't work,  
but maybe the animal recognized  
my effort to *deer-think*.

We stood there looking at each other,  
two neighbours, on either side of the fence,  
learning to put old differences behind them.

We looked at each other.  
I think the deer tried  
*people-think*.  
Or *poet-think*.

It uttered a pleading feeble sound. I felt it  
looking at something, someone behind me,  
but I didn't dare turn my head.  
Didn't want to lose  
an eyelash of, the note of  
what we found.

I tried *deer-talk*, repeating the sound  
I thought it made.  
It still seemed to be looking beyond me.  
Maybe it was so young it hadn't  
learned deer-talk yet,  
maybe its mother still put  
her nose to things,  
naming them, making sounds.  
I wondered if it was looking for  
the mother beyond me.