

John Witte

BESTIARY

Or was it
just a story we heard growing up
a child on the hot pavement by the chemical estuary someone

ran or fell
onto the turnpike at rush hour
the tires hushing over no one stopping the words just words

we get in and drive
the windshield buttered with insects
the sparrow in the grill the frogs at night like bubblewrap

the animals arrive
as in a dream beside the road
warm to their touch a river of tar they pause and turn back

or dash across
rolling under the wheels the slick
pelt the fut fut fut of cars passing over the flesh becoming

paint or paste
we have come this far together
we have written the book describing each animal and closed it.