

DEER SEASON

November, late afternoon. I'm driving fast,
only the parking lights on.
A minor infringement of the law. . . .

All along Route 4 men wearing orange
step out of the woods after a day
of hunting, their rifles pointed
toward the ground.

The sky turns red, then
purple in the west, and the luminous
birches lean over the narrow macadam road.

I cross the little bridge
near the pool called The Pork Barrel,
where the best fishing is,
and pass the Fentons' farm—the windows
of the milking parlor bright, the great
silver cooling tank beginning to chill the milk.

I've seen the veal calves drink from pails
in their stalls. Suppose even the ear of wheat
suffers in the mill. . . .
Driving fast in my car at dusk
I plan our evening meal.

THE HERMIT

The meeting ran needlessly late,
and while yawns were suppressed around the room
the river swelled until it spilled.
When the speaker finished, I made for the car
and home as fast as fog would allow—
until I came upon a barricade: beyond,
black pools eddied over the road. Detour.
The last familiar thing I saw—the steaming
heaps of bark beside the lumber mill.