

## By Allen Mendenhall

### Hunting

The deer, leaned over, frightens  
at the sound of the crack,  
the broken stick beneath his hoofs  
or the hunter's feet.

Wagging his tongue in the moonlight,  
shaking his fist at the sky,  
the hunter loses choice and chance.

A moment later  
it would have been gunfire:  
the sound  
either unreal or untrue  
that cannot be heard  
except by the living.

A crisp cool tug of air,  
like the long drag of a cigarette,  
wisps across the earth, slaps him in his face,  
reminds him  
of the coming cancer.

He looks through the sights, down the barrel,  
and fires at the nothing that's there  
to kill the something that is,  
the sum of his existence,  
and ours:  
hope and truth.

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