

Taylor Graham

DEAR GRACE

Forget that rambunctious fawn on You Tube –
this was a hairsplitting instant sun-in-the-eye
blinding as I second-gear the grade
out of Webber Creek – a doe out for a stroll –
no, on skinny sprung-coil legs she made
one-two-three quick spring-vaults across
persecution-pavement right in front of me.
Safe on the other side.

Myself pensive in wonder at how so much
animal-mass could levitate like it was
natural – myself encumbered in seatbelt
harness. I braked, altered speed-momentum-
purpose, I was rapt, wrapped in deer-grace
if only for the moment.

Taylor Graham is a volunteer search-and-rescue dog handler in the Sierra Nevada. She's included in the anthologies *Villanelles* (Everyman's Library, 2012) and *California Poetry: From the Gold Rush to the Present* (Santa Clara University, 2004). Her book *The Downstairs Dance Floor* was awarded the Robert Phillips Poetry Chapbook Prize. Her latest book is *What the Wind Says* (Lummo Press, 2013), poems about living and working with her canine search partners over the past 40 years.