

Peter at eighty

by [Donna Pucciani](#) in the [September 25, 2019](#) issue

Peter rides his bike into the morning.  
Today he flies through the forest  
early enough for the deer to emerge,  
watching him and thinking how odd a being  
wears cloth over pale skin, and a helmet,  
who sits atop wheels that propel him  
into their shaded space.

The doe stops to look at his freckled arms  
before rustling back into the trees.  
The crunch of twigs as she bounds away,  
her hooves a polished weight, echo.

The deer, her gaze the look of something newborn,  
frightened for only a moment,  
doesn't concern herself with thunder.  
The world swings between mud and sky,  
leaf and impending storm.

When she dies, as all creatures must—  
where will she go,  
her body with its pale spots on tender hairs,  
her eyes pooling the moon?  
Will she leave a corpse heavy as marble,  
spare as bone, in some woodland den,  
the wind swirling leaves like a living shroud?

Will Peter then be winding through  
the summer days, still riding?