**Artemis Undone**

I dreamed of shiny black deer

with antlers the color of gold

who didn’t scatter when

I opened the door

and found them crowded

onto my porch.

They examined me in unison,

eyes expectant, awake

glistening opaque

in the morning sun.

It was as if they were waiting for

a message of some sort,

biding their time

with restrained jostling

and the muted staccato

of hooves on soft wood.

I stood in the doorway,

still dreaming, barely breathing,

feeling curiously compelled to find words

so vital, so important

that mutant ruminants had mustered

on my porch to hear them.

But no words came,

so we stood in awkward communion

as they waited restlessly

for me to grasp that the message, rather,

was from them—wild hart and hind—to me:

Be gentle but vigilant, trust your instincts, eat leaves.

  *—Pamela Michael*