

## THE SICK DEER

JOAN FINNIGAN

Four men in the Gatineau Hills,  
ski-ing along the dazzling trails of March,  
found a sick deer  
lying helpless  
in the snow.

The fallen animal raised its head  
and turned on them  
the gentle pleading pools of those eyes  
which only fail to move killers,  
and it cried like something human,  
and tried to rise  
but fell back

the four skiers stood in a semi-circle  
as stricken as men

faced with a woman in tears  
and the first of them bent down  
and gathered the sick animal  
into his arms and they began,  
by mutual consent,  
a long Samaritan journey  
back to civilization.

the deer was a yearling;  
it weighed forty-five pounds  
and they had to take turns  
carrying the burden of their humanity,  
down the steep hills,  
across the long trails.

flagging, stumbling, sweating,  
two of them remembering the weight of wounded buddies  
at Salerno and Dieppe,  
they made the long trek back over the miles  
with the sick deer in their arms,  
collecting a retinue of skiers  
as they came out of the wilderness  
into the areas  
crawling with human hill-flies.

at the first Aid outpost  
the crowds gathered around;  
the tow ran alone,  
a caesura in pleasure,  
and many eyes watched the Night Rider  
and the four committed men  
wrap the sick deer in blankets  
and strap him in a toboggan  
for the last stretch of the journey  
down to the road.

there was not enough all people joined together  
could do for that sick deer;  
many offered help;  
others kept their longings to themselves  
and one woman said,  
in a voice that reeled through the hills,  
"Oh, isn't it terrible,

it cries  
just like a child."

at the road they tucked the shivering animal  
into the back seat of one of their cars  
and drove with a real sense of emergency  
to a veterinarian in Hull  
who, without question of fee,  
used all his equipment and skill  
to treat the creature  
which died a few hours later

of a mysterious undiagnosed disease.

back in the hills,  
the tows resumed full speed,  
sucked into their clanging maws  
a whole long line after line  
of impatient humans  
and spewed them all out  
at the tops of hills  
never into the dusk done with the obsessive ones,  
swooshing forever down, down  
without the struggle of going up.

so engrossed were they,  
they did not see the child  
lying in the killing winds,  
in the snows of violent suns,  
stricken in seeds  
and in bones.

Neither did anyone hear the child cry;  
children don't cry like deer.

## **I FORGIVE YOU**

STEVIE SMITH

I forgive you, Maria,  
Things can never be the same,  
But I forgive you, Maria,  
Though I think you were to blame.  
I forgive you, Maria  
I can never forget,  
But I forgive you, Maria,  
Kindly remember that.

## **WARTY BLYGGENS THE**

DON MARQUIS

i met a toad  
the other day by the name  
of warty blyggens  
he was sitting under  
a toadstool  
feeling contented  
he explained that when the cosmos  
was created  
that toadstool was especially  
planned for his personal  
shelter from sun and rain  
thought out and prepared  
for him

do not tell me  
said warty blyggens  
that there is not a purpose  
in the universe  
the thought is blasphemy  
a little more  
conversation revealed  
that warty blyggens  
considers himself to be  
the center of the said  
universe  
the earth exists  
to grow toadstools for him  
to sit under  
the sun to give him light

by day and  
and wheelin  
to make bea  
the night fo  
warty bligg  
to what act  
do you imp  
this interest  
of the creat  
of the unive  
i asked him  
why is it th  
are so great  
ask rather  
said warty b  
what the un  
has done to  
if i were a  
human bein  
not laugh  
too complac  
at poor wart  
for similar  
absurdities  
have only to  
lodged in th