

Taking down the guitar from a hook on the wall. It's out of tune. I tune it enough to play without discomfort. The song is called "Hunting season". It's about all-out conflict and it doesn't have a happy ending. It ends with destruction.

I break a string. Looking for a new one is something I'll do later. I'm in no mood to work. I just want to do what I want to do.

A deer passes by outside my window and is soon followed by another. They're standing across the lawn and I pick up binoculars to see them better. I can't get the focus right and the fish-eye makes me nauseous. I close one eye and that helps a little.

Now I see there are more deer than before. Twelve, maybe fifteen. There are more deer out there than there are people in this house. They could take it if they wanted to. We'd be easily overcome.

I start to wonder if I should be worried. With one eye closed and the other out of focus I start to panic. I think I see one looking at me. I think I see them all looking at me. Twenty deer, or maybe fifty or a hundred. There's an endless procession of deer filing past my house. An unbroken chain stretching back to the primordial stag. I see roots and moss hanging from his crown. Tectonic plates draped over his antlers like shredded velvet. And I see him struck down by a nascent human blow. The stag's legs buckle and his knee hits the ground. A ripple spreads from the impact. A domino shudder that echoes up the line. And every deer ever turns their head to look at me.

I put down the binoculars and run to the door. There's an air gun leaning there loaded with pellets. I still feel blind but I grab it. I open the door and start firing.

They drop when they're hit and it sounds like music. Each one makes a different note when struck, like the bars of a xylophone. I'm not scared anymore but I don't stop shooting. The deer pile up on the lawn. And the air is full of dissonance.

