

Everyone hunts

here. I do not excuse my own
monstrosity or the guns.
I have never held
one. I have hunted,
though. Materiality
is part of provision—you
can't hold my empathy,
so I'll force-feed it to you
for dinner. My twelve-
year-old brother tells
me that his hunting safety
class was boring
& it scared him. I ask
if he would be sad
if he shot something—
I ask so many questions
& he looks at me
like I am a monster,
says maybe. When he sends
me the picture he holds
the doe's ears up
by his fingertips, the blood
splattered across her
chest, on his orange jacket,
he looks scared & calls
me later, ecstatic. I am far
away & venison is salty
& mountains are sour
with blood, pennies
in a bucket, I am scared
about him in the woods &

at the park & when he eats
dinner. My father says
my brother is like me, he
really cares. Apathy is learned
behavior. I have a doe
tattooed on my torso,
a protest against men's
violence on my body, my
femininity carved into my
skin, ornament & ache, &
someday when I tell my brother
why, will he find it boring,
will it scare him, will I
be staring down the barrel
of a gun that only one of us knows
is already firing.