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## Because the World Hasn't Ended Yet

Todd Davis

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## Because the World Hasn't Ended Yet

Bitter cold, the old man of the creek / weeps . . .

—*Meng Chiao*

After the ice storm, in the deepest crease  
of the hollow, fourteen deer skate  
the creek bed, struggle to climb steep sides

they slid down when freezing rain coated  
the night. A hooved-leap before gravity  
realizes the captives might escape, and they slip

back, still caught two days later in cold's snare.  
They stamp holes in the ice, lick at water  
that flows freely downhill. It would be too much

to watch them starve. We cart hay, toss it  
to the prisoners, careful not to stumble  
and become imprisoned ourselves.

We wake to coyote screams and wonder  
how many might be killed. In the chilled moonlight  
we dress. Headlamps brighten our steps.

By the end of the week warm rain will arrive  
and melt these prison bars. Until then  
we'll chase away whatever we can.

*Todd Davis*

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TODD DAVIS is the author of seven collections of poetry, most recently *Coffin Honey* (2022) and *Native Species* (2019), both published by Michigan State University Press. He has won the Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Bronze and Silver Awards, the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Prize, and the Chautauqua Editors Prize. He teaches environmental studies at Pennsylvania State University's Altoona College.

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