My wife set out three pots—
blue pansies, yellow pansies,
snapdragons.

“Why are there flowers
on the picnic table?”
I asked.

Six mule deer
sailed over the picket fence
like kites on a windy day.

They walked to the flowers,
clipped each pansy neatly
half-way down the stem.

They ruminated, snipped,
watched me
watching them.

“It’s a test,” my wife said.
“I want to know what
the deer will not eat.”

“Snapdragons,” I said.

But I felt guilty
as if the deer and I
were cheating,

were passing notes
with all the right answers
while the teacher took a bath.

“I should know by morning,” my wife said.
“Probably,” I said,
as I smiled at the deer,

gave them that wink
reserved for those who know
how it all ends.

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