I tried to bring a book. I tried to bring a chair. I tried to talk to the other moms. I tried to talk to the dads. I tried to bring the team snack but failed, bringing carrots. I tried to get a sense that you can’t kick the ball first if you’re the one who kicked it off but I think I have that wrong too. I tried to pull the grass and eat the milky ends but there was elk shit all over and dog piss probably too. Really, there was nothing to eat except carrots, and therefore, I had a hard time paying attention. She didn’t kick the ball hard enough and when she did kick it, the ball went out of bounds. Sometimes, she kicked it the wrong direction. Sometimes, someone kicked it hard in the wrong direction and all the kids ran all the way out of bounds, offsides, down the hill, over elk shit and dog piss chasing a ball that would never come back. For me, it was good for a metaphor anyway—chasing youth or boys or of hungry members of the Cervidae family looking for edible grass on the other side of the mountain where perhaps the fire or the drought didn’t wipe all the grass out.

I apologize. I need to apply some kind of drama because I wasn’t going to get up off my chair or put down my book and join them in chasing that ball. I knew I’d never catch it and the team would never forgive me for getting in the way of a game whose rules have nothing to do with how to feed so many animals with so many feet.

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