Bum Bam Boom

J. S. Absher

After school the Greer boy and I
run home past the bottling plant
where I glimpse through the plate-glass
the endless capping of mouths.
As a semi chugs past, we notice
the trailer looks funny—cocked back

on its haunches—when we hear the thud
of its rear tire, freed from the lug nuts,
leaping the curb behind us. The tire
races across a yard and half knocks down
one fence before it bursts through airborne
and rolls across the next yard to stop

upright against the far fence. If we hadn’t
been running, we’d a-been squashed flat,
whispers the boy. Jesus saved us. His brother
says he’s slow, under-growed
and pigeon-toed, with one long horn
and one big eye, and the boy throws me
down the steps when I call him retard.
I cry myself to sleep for shame. Daddy
calls it rough justice. In the woods he shows me
a white fawn. A freak of nature, he says,
a goner. It looks at me with big pink eyes.
It glows in the laurel like snow.