

Vira

I dug through the day, and buried Nikon as the sun went down, next to mother and father and our baby brother who did not live. And as I stood up, I heard a noise in the trees, and turned to see a white deer standing at the edge of the trees. And I looked at him, and he looked at me for a moment, then I turned and went home, for I was very tired.

But I did not sleep very well, and at dawn I decided to go back to visit my family. I picked some of the last wildflowers, and walked through the crunchy grass because there had been a frost, and there was fog still burning off as the sun rose. And as I came to the spot, there he was, the white deer. He had slept for the night on top of Nikon's grave, resting his nose on the stone I laid at his head. He almost could have been the deer that Nikon hunted, even though I knew Nikon shot it, that it's meat was hanging in our attic. The deer did not startle as I approached, but just watched me. And I knelt down and laid down the flowers, and then the deer got up and silently disappeared into the forest. He had stood watch for the first night when I did not have the strength to. A week later I found antlers in the trees that looked just like the ones the white deer had, but they were very old and had been shed years ago. I never saw the deer again.