

THE MERCY HAMMER

Driving home from the A&P, I said
to my brother, "What's that smell!"
That same instant I knew: decaying flesh.
Around the bend we saw a white dump truck,
parked on the side of the road,
three-fourths filled with dead deer—about twenty.
Two men were walking in the woods
looking for a dead deer.

The white truck reminded me of an ambulance.
In mirror image letters "Deer Departed"
should have been written on the truck's front bumper.
Where are the dead deer disposed of?
What if far future archeologists
were to find the dump site.
What would they make of their find? "Deer Cults of
the Outlying Regions of the Ancient Christian Megacities"
seemed likely as a paper's title.
Condensed in an annual archeological
abstract it would read:

“Local belief systems sprang up as the infrastructures of the Western Hemisphere’s megacities deteriorated; these challenged the megacities long hegemony.

Cause of deer’s death: blunt trauma, but the specifics of the ritual attest to its Christian origins.

The ritual implement on impact was usually moving between 11.17 and 15.64 mps. These meter per second figures are compelling; they represent a deceleration from speeds averaging 22.30 mps. A chemical reaction provided the initial force, and a mechanical system provided the deceleration. The entire sacred device has been dubbed the Mercy Hammer.”