

Trophy Animals

The animals I never killed
lie in gutters and hang on walls watching me,
stand up from their graves and follow me down the road

The deer I never killed wonder why I refused them.
They blink and ask, "What kind of hunter are you?"

In dreams I caress their hides
and feel their empty hearts beating.
In coffee houses and truck stops
I touch the painted black noses
of trophy elk and bears and say a silent prayer,

"Next fall I'll pull the trigger,
next season I'll bring you home."

Randall L. Eaton