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You are walking in a forest; the white noise of nature, crackling, omnipresent. In a small clearing, you find a dead fox, body ruptured by buckshot. It is the first animal you have seen since you entered the woods. You have never been this close to one before and your eyes seem to absorb every detail of its form, negating the peripheral vision of the surrounding foliage. Despite your gaze confirming what you vicariously knew about the species, visually, its tragic beauty stuns you, lying there like an elaborate equation, violently disproved. You continue walking and a short time later the crack of a shotgun pierces the forest, and, as its echo fades, the erstwhile, creaturely cacophony vanishes with it. No wind in the trees, you stare into the dumb forest, now an utterly silent domain. You recall that Keats said 'the poetry of earth is never dead', but mouthing the words, you recognise that fear – and by extension, mystery – are powerful silencers. You have read in a magazine article that many wild animals' hearts slow down significantly when their ears alert them of danger, restricting their movement enough that some, in an antipodean twist of fate, even die. This is what you think about as you take in this spectacle of silence; an implosion of sound in the aftermath of its opposite.

Leaving the forest and joining a track leading upwards through the purlieu, you venture up till you strike upon a farm. It is quiet as you walk up to the various wooden buildings. Hung on the wall of a barn is an array of animal heads. Some are bare skulls, of various genus; ox, wolf, bear, fox... There are, however, several deer heads, which appear to be arrested in a zombiesque half-state between death and oblivion. Faintly visible, under each one, are places and years carved into the wood – *Atna 1906*, *Hemsjøen 1899*, *Åstvollen 1908* – names you recognise from your map. Terrains of fungal growth create undulations on the craniums which subtly mimic the landscape they have been taken from and will



from *Requiem*
pencil on paper
2011/12

sepulchrally gaze out over, like memento mori, for lifetimes to come. You think of your grandfather's house. Although only an amateur taxidermist, in recent years his output has been prodigious. They are lined up against and on the walls of his workshop and adjoining rooms. He uses plastic forms, bought from a supplier, to mount the skin upon, and has an undeviating and eerily homogenous predilection for the same shoulder and head moulds with a slight turn. These deer on the barn seem curiously proud, as if stoically symbolising some mysterious aspect of mythological lineage.

Retracing your steps, you head back towards the town. It is approaching twilight and you follow your previous trail, winding down through the landscape. You play music and sing songs incessantly in your head, and, as you strike upon the breadcrumb trail of earlier way-marks, you reprise each number in inverted turn. It has become overcast and the veil of cloud strips the prospect of colour from the sun's rays. You emerge from the tree-line and survey the domain, now grisaille under the neutral half-light.

Davey Moor 2012



Exhibit A
ink on canvas
2011