
POETRY

DEER

Farm deer are curious—not odd or strange,
and certainly not strangers to the land.
They've been here all along, even before
my father came to claim this land as his,
affix a home on it and fences too
and till and sow and make the soil say wheat
instead of honeyed silver-willow patches,
squat stones, short grass, and upright trembling-leafed
white aspens.

And the deer, quite rightly, think
they have at least retained some privileges,
not squatters' rights—the aforesaid squat stones
have those (the legalese will just creep in)—
but liberty to come and go, to graze
and browse, to look about and birth, need be,
their young within remaining poplar bluffs
without a by-your-leave. Perhaps they feel
that we, Johnnies-come-lately, have to be
endured and, with familiarity,
in time will be fit audience for them!

But I was saying that the deer on this
old farm, deserted now except for my
own strolling on the trail across it, are
plain curious, simply inquisitive,
of my beholding them. Sometimes I come
across one feeding, head half-hidden in
the roadside grass. The wind is right this warm
spring day, with cooling drops of rain, and I
press forwards till I freeze at the twitching tail

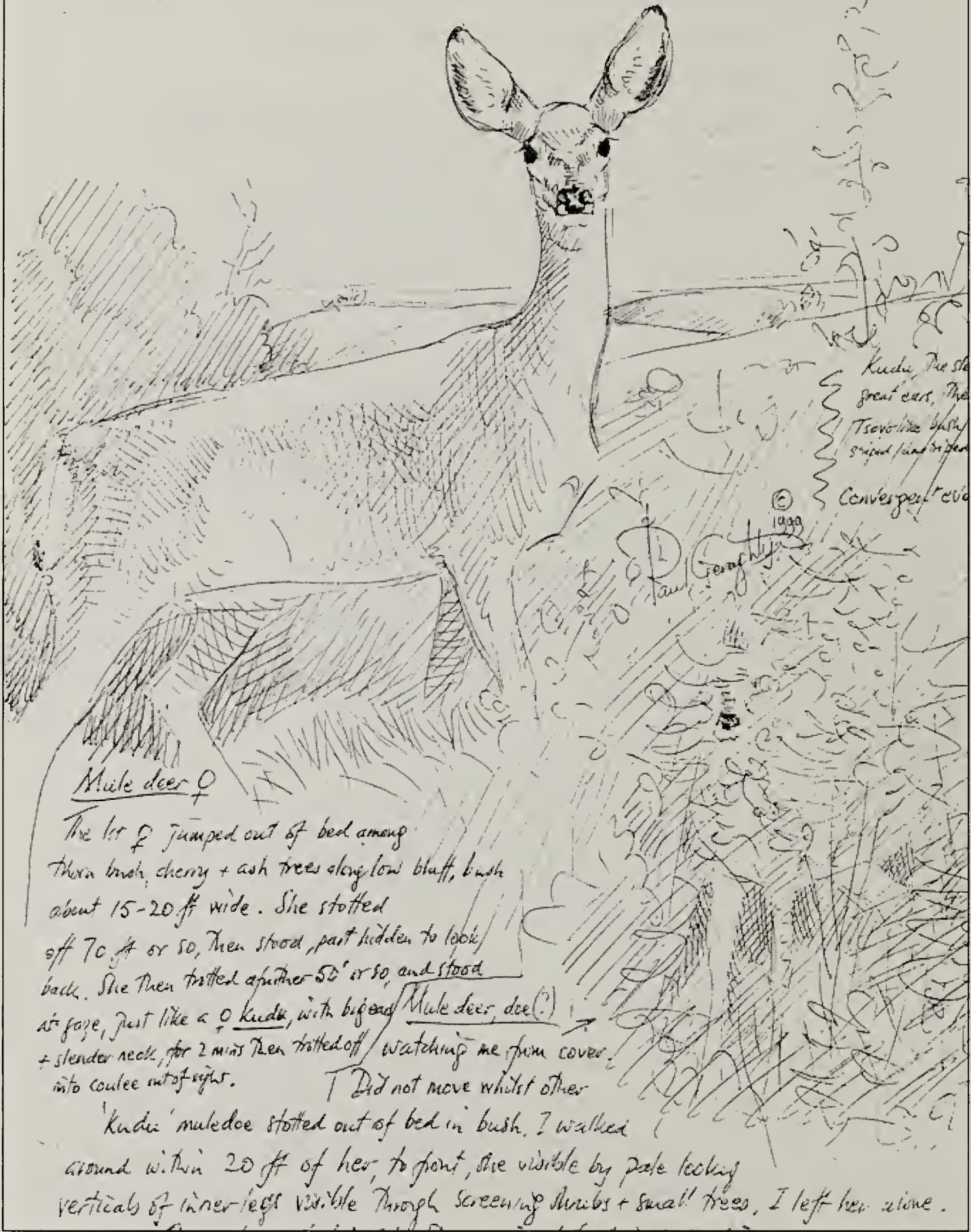
and upraised head. The animal, alert,
his neck outstretched, sees me, yet not
alarmed—
he's seen me more than once before—advances
in my direction, step by cautious step.
And then, as if for show, he leaps sideways
(a rainbow-arch abutted in some trees),
stands gazing there to see if he were seen.

Another time another deer, a doe,
is browsing at the far end of a bush
where roses grow (it is the rose leaves she
is eating); I again am walking down
the trail. The evening air is redolent
of musky odours, of the roses mixed
with remnant silver-leafed wolf willow. But
a quirk is in me—I am determined just
this once to be no audience for deer,
but looking ever up and onwards at
the luminescent skies becoming dusk,
my step unwavering to the west. Yet now
a sideways glimpse reveals the doe has come
from out behind the bush's shelter into
the open field to better see my own
(to her) strange conduct. I continue as
before, eyes front, until I reach the farm's
west border. Then I swing about—the doe
is right behind me! Curious she well
may be, but maybe she is thinking too
of status: some attention is her due.

- Victor C. Friesen

③ July 18'92

Blue Hills



Kudu, the sta
 great ears, the
 T-savor like bushy
 striped / and in feet
 Convergent eva

Mule deer ♀

The lot ♀ jumped out of bed among
 thorn brush, cherry + ash trees along low bluff, bush
 about 15-20 ft wide. She stotted
 off 70 ft or so, then stood, part hidden to look
 back. She then trotted another 50' or so, and stood
 at faye, just like a o kudu, with big ears Mule deer, dee(?)
 + slender neck, for 2 mins then trotted off watching me from cover
 into coulee out of sight.

I Did not move whilst other

'Kudu' muledoe stotted out of bed in bush. I walked
 around within 20 ft of her, to point, she visible by pale looking
 verticals of inner legs visible through screening shrubs + small trees. I left her alone.