

## Wilderness House Literary Review 11/3

*Doug Hawley*  
**Freedom**

LAST WEEK I was returning from a normal work party removing ivy (ivy seemed like a good idea at the time) in my local Portland area Tryon State Park when I saw a herd of deer 150 feet (or forty-some meters to the non-US) ahead of me on the trail with a man behind them. This seems odd because while deer are seen occasionally in the park; a whole herd would be unusual. As I got closer, I could tell that my inferior depth perception, which had caused me to fail as a baseball outfielder, had failed me again. These eight animals were baby goats about a foot and half high (or half a meter to most of the world).

I asked the man behind them if he were their goatherd, but he demurred. We agreed that they probably originated in the environmental education farm about a hundred yards (or meters) away. They seemed to be having a great time on their walk gamboling (not gambling – goats aren't idiots) without restraint. If you want to see what that looks like, check out you tube. Different goats, but you get the idea. They were socialized to the extent that people seemed to be neither particularly interesting nor fear inducing. I didn't get the chance to find out what they think of dogs, which are common in the park.

My work partner later confirmed that their enclosure had broken and they all decided to go on a harmless walkabout. Now that they are back in their corral, I wonder if their leader is planning for another prison break. Was their day of freedom like playing hooky? They might not have enjoyed the day off if they had known about the coyotes.