Traveling Through the Dark

William Stafford

1	Traveling through the dark I found a deer			
2	dead on the edge of the Wilson River road.			
3	It is usually best to roll them into the canyon:			
4	that road is narrow; to swerve might make more dead			
5	By glow of the tail-light I stumbled back from the car			
6	and stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;			
7	She had stiffened already, almost cold.			
8	I dragged her off; she was large in the belly.			
9	My fingers touching her side brought me to reason $-$			
10	her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,			
11	alive, still, never to be born.			
12	Beside that mountain road I hesitated.			
13	The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;			
14	under the hood purred the steady engine.			
15	I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;			
16	around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.			
17	I thought hard for us all $-$ my only swerving $-$,			
18	then pushed her over the edge into the river.			

Discuss the conceit $-$ presented in this poem.	or	extended	metaphor