

Cynthia Hogue

The Walking Woman of Lewisburg, PA

I'll reach the birch tree lightning broke,
cracked, split, now dry beyond repair,
cast toward a terse, blue sky, birds
sailing on wind's wing in silhouette,
and fly with my dog back home,

I think, when a woman I've seen walking far
along the two-lane highway in and out of town,
on alleys (never streets), striding,
a slip of a person, bent as if skating
into a stiff wind all the days of the year,
who for whatever reason can't relent,

stops me: my dog, she tells me,
reminds her of her own whole-
cloth loss one year—twin huskies, husband, house:
what unspooled her on the road,
face the ruddy hue now of autumn apples
left lying on the ground after first frost.