

FARM DOG

DOROTHY MAHONEY

When the old dog died, another wandered
across the cornfields and stuck around,
so she chained him to the same spot where
he drank from the same bucket, ate from
the same hubcap, slept in the same shadows,
became the old dog by his sameness,
barking at distant trucks and a fox
that would pass, seeking windfalls
beneath the crabapple.

Then, winter,
in her dead husband's jacket and boots,
she wore a path through snow,
bringing more straw from the barn,
breaking the ice like a blind eye over water,
and the dog drew nearer, ducking
under her outstretched arm, catching the chain
around her legs and she fell, the dog
down with her, whimpering, afraid.
She sat there and wept, his tongue on her face,
finding her again.