

PSYCHOGEOGRAPHIC MAP:
WALKING MY DOG
Maria Teutsch

Snow last night, my black and white dog
insane in her delight, runs wide circles
as hail bounces off my face.

A train rumbles by overhead. The underpass covered
in graffiti. A timeless kind of communiqué:
the Visigoths wrote on slate,

and the Anglo-Saxons used gall, nuts, and wine
to fill horns with ink to create
this kind of frescoed conversation in public space.

Carved in town squares with awls and pumice
like this covered passage where mattress
fortresses create individual bedrooms,

stacked reusable coffee cups plead for offerings.
Graffiti overhead, *Schließ auf die Reichen!*
or fuck the rich. A lone man wags

his knee above a tatty blanket,
reading on his phone. My dog licks her hand.
Our shadows linked in winter's light.

I plunk a few coins in his Starbuck's cup
and turn into an alley of gnarled trees branching
across the steely sky of Berlin's January.

A purple heart lined in black is sprayed
over initials chiseled into a brick fence.
This epitaph to love insists on permanence.
And the first glimpse of the lake
like an exhale. Partly frozen,
the willows in their winter bronze

always fill me with a sadness
that is part awe, part grief.
And the glee of my city dog

running amidst the trees,
splattering mud wallowing in puddles.
The afternoon sun's brief appearance

is already threatening to set
so we head back home.
The air damp, a chill there.

And more grafitti to translate:
"She plucked the strings with her thumb,
but suddenly taken, now she is silent."

And the wind kicks up flurries,
and in it I hear her guitar, and hum
an ancient song on my tongue.