

City Dog

The day I die I hope this old yellow dog
will slip from my fist like string through a bead

and jog west, tongue out, dim eyes leaping
to the distant green and granite face

of the mountain that presided over my youth.
This final errand: to shed over seven states,

through days of unslacking hardwoods
and humid miles of corn, the great weight

of living within the blackened brick walls
of this restless city, and to grow unworn again,

to return as the last bright spark of my prodigal heart
to the bowing lupine and flickering aspen forest

where my broad father, and his before him,
gave his bones back to the everlasting earth.

—David J. Passey

This poem won first place in the 2010 BYU Studies poetry contest.