

WALKING

Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

--Song of Myself

Walking, shoving my chin deep into the coat's collar,
curling my hands around dustballs in the pockets,

Walking past the house, past the thermometer that
points a red finger at freezing, past the wheat-
colored stacks of pine needles the old woman in
the bandana has raked,

past the giant pine I crawled under to hide, now over
its needles that cover all tracks, now bending to
touch the frosted cone hurled down,

past the row of cedars that guard the mouth of these
woods, past blue spruce with sagging breasts, then
the scrub pine, scaring two partridge out of the
brush,

walking, kicking maple leaves into a sound of fire,
past the log blooming a garden of polypores, past
the pond that holds to its memory bass below, birch
leaning over their mirror,

walking over moss, sinking into sponge, a damp odor
rising when the surface cracks, past the shyness of
beech, around mud not yet marked by a paw,

walking, exploding the air with a snap of dry twigs,
out of light through the inner forest where
branches hold hands and gleam gray in the silence,
where dark marries day,

walking past the barbed holly, the bluejay shouting
warning, toward the graveyard to stand in the
circle where firs groan and creak against the
hair of the wind,

letting the will go,

walking, my breath steaming, inviting the poem to
rise up from these gnarled roots through the soles
of my boots, my feet, the trunk of my body, my
heart, to step onto this white page before the
first snowfall.



Rose Maruca