Capturing the Dog – After 9/11
Charles Huschle

All my attempts to capture the day in early September
when my dog disappeared have failed, because I have
lost my camera and the film along with it.
I have revisited my haunts in hopes of
finding the old Minolta, which my father gave to me
on my twenty-first birthday, but with no luck. It is as if the
cafe, the library, my closet, my friend's porch
have nothing to say any more, no clue to give me. My lenses,
bountiful in their sweep, have refracted
ocean water light, Asian sun, my children scowling,
and the pale faces of people who in their innocence
left before the day in early September
when my dog disappeared after I let him out to perform his daily
ablutions in the yard and to meander along the street before
my house where I lived until that day, because
I left home to find him. I packed items
in my backpack and put on my sturdy shoes, made calls
to friends, my boss, the bank, a lawyer, and
began walking north; better to walk than to drive, I thought.
I've heard dogs go off far from home to die,
and so I am following him, I can smell him in the wind,
his rough paws with their graham cracker scent,
his unwashed hairy hide; I can
feel the swell of his chest, hear his tags jangling in the
distance, always a step or a mile ahead of me; I can trace
his spoor, find his tracks in the gathering snow, and
hope he finds enough to eat on his journey
which began on such a sunny blue day
that to look in the sky would have made you cry with the
beauty, the simplicity, the deep blue of the
sky with no clouds, only con-trails of high jets and their
cool deep voices, and the sky empty again after they
passed, shocking and wild, the sky under which
my dog began walking, as living
had become too much for him
under these conditions.