Lucy M. Logsdon

Self-Portrait / Burn

After your sister dies,
you feel scorched, hollow,
the shell of a burnt out house.
A controlled fire. You knew
it was coming.

The metaphors continue: you
see yourself as split, an apple sliced
neatly down the core, a blue glazed plate,
carelessly dropped, cleaved in two.
A twig snapped. A broken match.

The person before your sister
died, and the one after. Look, two girls
in a July haze of cornfield, two
girls in a beat-up Pontiac, driving
through Iowa, two girls in a pasture.

Two girls warming by a crackling
bonfire. Then there's one
stuck with the rest of the story.
A green clothesline strung across
an empty lawn. A sad blue chair.

A worn down red lighter. The loneliness
of unmatched things. Driving through
Iowa, you smoked cheap cigarettes because
what did it matter: she was already dying,
the summer was already blazing.

You get up. You breathe in and out. You
give up a hundred times, offer anything
to keep her here. Nothing will in the end.
The metaphors accumulate, catch fire, flame.
You are left with her cattle, chewing their cud.

Her pale orange cat on a bamboo
floor. The sun moves, and he's
gone. The world weighs so heavy,
and then, without notice, so light.
We end, always. We smolder, singe.

Bring it on. Burn down this lovely life.
Your heart will break again,
but not in the same way—
so fully, so completely,
so brutally in two—
one half into what might have been,
one half into what was.

About Lucy M. Logsdon

Lucy M. Logsdon received an MFA in creative writing from Columbia University and teaches English and creative writing at Southeastern Illinois College. Her poems have been published in *Nimrod*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Poet Lore*, *Literary Orphans*, and *Gingerbread House Literary Magazine*. She lives in southern Illinois, and her poetry outreach activities include readings at local libraries and community poetry workshops. She blogs at *L-Squared* (lucymlogsdon.tumblr.com).