

It's Good for the Heart

by John Cantey Knight

She can't drive, never learned how;
too old for a car, anyway, at eighty. Walked
all her life; barefoot, at least in summer,
as a girl. Tennis shoes now, red clay in the
wrinkled leather, her face too, she walks to
Alexander's for groceries, small stuff,
of course. She slows down by New Liberty,
except on Sunday. *Churches are for*
hypocrites, and she's right. But she prays
as she walks. Two years ago, she climbed the
Blood, Georgia's second highest mountain.
She looks at the new houses above the fields
where she stripped cane, picked beans
and squash, gathered ears of corn. She talks
to herself. Here's where the old Berry
place used to be. There they kilt and skinned
the biggest damn bear, there's the house
England died in. All the roads are paved
except for the riprap road she follows home,
in and out most every day, like she's done all
her life, the old cabin half-broken, spitting
snuff, growing older, cussing, praying,
remembering eighty damn years, still walking.