

Karl Plank

## HOW HUNGER SOUNDS

*Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many are the days of the years of your life?" (Genesis 47:8)*

When he asks of the days and years of your life,  
he is not being polite nor is he curious about your age.  
He wants to know if grain has been ample and  
your body warm when sheaves bronze in the sun,  
if the milled flour has become bread that satisfies.  
Or, he has already read the lines of your brow  
as a story of parched fields and faces lost to view,  
and seeks to understand the ways of famine,  
if the ache is all. It will not be your final word,  
but your clearest. *Few and evil have been my days*,  
you reply, as if to say, they are not long enough  
and still too long. Those who went before had it better.

The heart's hollow growls:  
this is how hunger sounds.

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