

Karl Plank

**HE STAMMERS (*VIDE* GENESIS 48:7)**

My teacher spoke of *an anacoluthon in the syntax of human piety*. At the core, a *not-following*, he would have added, helping with the etymology of the troubling term.

And there it sits, blocking the way—this chasm, really—  
rubbling into pieces words and the ligaments  
from which whole sentences come, the sentences  
from which paragraphs . . .

Forgive my prolixity, Jacob.  
I want plainly to say,  
I am listening  
and have heard  
your voice falter.

You were reciting  
your past itinerary  
and came to a stop:  
*While I—*  
The weight of a life-span

burdens that dash,  
a bridge of silence  
you cross with evident  
difficulty to the  
other side where

wait words  
that erupt from  
the biting maw:

*Rachel died.*

*While I—Rachel died.*

--for Paul W. Meyer, *in memoriam*

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