

Karl Plank

PRAYER BEFORE A SERMON IN THE NAVE

“Since we found that the union could not be brought about
by an elevation it must be attempted by a descent.”

Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*

*Uphold Thou me
that I may lift up
the heavy-hinged hatch*

that seals us in the hold
of captive cargo.
We fumble in the dark, hands up
to feel our way in gestures
of surrender or pleadings
to stop, to stay away.
We have touched the walls,
seen the absence of light
and now would ascend
to the trapdoor, a ladder of bodies.
Reach out, I cry, *that I may lift up
Thee.*

--Published in *Homage to Soren Kierkegaard: A Poetry Anthology*, eds. Dana Gioia and Mary Grace Mangano (Wiseblood Books, 2023), 67.