

Karl Plank

PRECARITY

--After Georgia O'Keeffe, "From a Day at Esther's" (1976-1977)

This moment will not last.
A blue circle sits on a tabletop
of identical color,
a flat horizontal bar
like two others
more intensely blue
stacked beneath it,
firm, level ground,
we might think,
for the world to rest upon.
And those crossbeams,
what do they rest upon,
someone asks.
This is not the Hindu tale
of one elephant standing
on top of another
all the way down,
for this last mesa
balances on the round edge
of one more circle.
Already weight is shifting,
pieces chipping off,
the first downfall
before Pedernal topples
into the yellow fluff
of cottonwood trees,
leaving the sun
to drop on crumbling horizons.
But isn't it beautiful,
we must add,
Piedra Lumbre, shining stone
mountain, lake, and star,
this instant of poise,
the grace of line and curve
on the eve of whatever comes after.

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