

**Karl Plank**

**THE ENDS OF BARNs**

--after Georgia O'Keeffe, "Ends of Barns" (1922)<sup>1</sup>

Linseed oil and rust mixed to seal barn wood  
in burnt tones, in red that held winter's dark berried  
tartness taut, tightened wide-plank pores  
against the advance of wind blowing cold,  
weather beating boards to surrender such  
ruddiness to elements of this day  
as the day before when snow had fallen  
and the old man, bundled in field coat, cap,  
and woolen scarf, a worker's sheath and shield,  
bent his back and set to the task that made  
his body a machine, the steady stab  
of the shovel, the lift and pitch of drifts,  
a path between banks. Now he disappears  
within the ends of barns, dreaming of fire.

Published in *Orange Blossom Review* 13 (2024);  
<https://orangeblossomreview.org/journal/the-ends-of-barns/>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/35050>