

STAR GAZING 1

--after Ida O'Keeffe, "Star Gazing in Texas, 1938"

The earth spins below in a vast roundness:
Fields, barns askew in their roll to the edge,
which is no edge, only the steady turn
of the terrain on which you have walked out
into this night lit by star-shine and swaths
of the moon's luster bathing the corral
in light, the clodded ground, the gentle beasts,
two horses in vigil at the fence gap,
staring at the hilltop where you ascend
to plant your bare feet on the mound of dirt
and stretch your slender neck, straining for sky.
Arms upraised, you ease back your head into
the cradle your hands form, at ease knowing
that here it is you who is the still point.

STAR GAZING 2

--after Ida O'Keeffe, "Star Gazing in Texas, 1938"

The lure of light as it lavishes lifts
you upward from the dark. The rude hilltop
should be yours alone, as is the rapture

that holds fast your sight to the night sky and
this rare glow of soft luster descending.
So dear it is that nothing else matters now,
not these two boys playing at your feet
for whom not much matters at all except
the rough-house romp and tumbling roll back down
the steep hill where they would have ruled as kings.
Eyes covered and sightless, they are blind boys
in a child's game, heedless of heaven's night-
nod to these Texas plains and the thin-lined
horizon that has just come within reach.

Karl Plank is the author of *The Grace of Falling Things* (Grayson Books, 2024). His poetry has appeared in publications such as *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Zone 3*, *Spiritus*, and *Tahoma Literary Review*, and has been featured on *Poetry Daily*. A past winner of the Thomas Carter Prize (Shenandoah), he is the J.W. Cannon Professor of Religion, Emeritus, at Davidson College.