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Barn

Michael Chitwood

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Michael Chitwood

Barn

I rode you like a passenger ship
bound for new territory.
Your hayless lofts
were sun-slatted from the cracks
between the old boards.
I could almost feel the bulk of you moving,
setting out across time,
getting back to your busy days
full of calves and two mules
(I knew your story)
or maybe into your future: caved-in roof
and being burnt for volunteer firefighting practice.
I played the tines
of your rusty harp hay rake.
You were where I found
a clutch of kittens, soft nest of mewling.
A tomcat later found them:
I gasped at the slaughtered bloody mess.
In one of your mangers
I hid my uncle's magazine
that like your loft window
gave me views of distant marvels.
You smelled like what I imagined
a grave would smell like,
old leather, burlap, ancient manure.
The grain of your boards was braille.
My fingers read the bloodline.
Except for me, no one used you anymore,
long quiet afternoons.
You were a kind of prayer.