

Garth Barbee

ON WATCHING AN OLD BARN COLLAPSE

I can think of little as beautiful
As living on a land graced by an old barn
Or shed with a short fence running alongside-
Some work of human labor, a volume of history
Bound by the memory of those whose toil
Erected its simple frame-now in disrepair
And allowed the dignity to collapse under
Its own weight and peacefully rot to the ground.
Think of the pleasure given with watchful eye
To half a lifetime in attending the gentle
Surrender back to the earth: grey weathered
Boards, damp with the dew of a thousand morns,
Wet from summer storm, powdered with late fall frost,
Buried in winter quiet, fogged with nostalgia,
Cracked and split, full of shadow, letting in shades
Of yellow grey, and blue black light, under
A broken roof split lopsided, and soft at boards bottom
Like the earth beneath, feeding the vines,
And the ivys, and the saplings sprouting up,
Giving feast to the insects and the beetles.
Think of lifting a board to find the life
And the black soil teeming with the richness of decay.