

MAURICE MANNING

ONE VIEW OF TIME

You have to squint to see that it's there
under the eave at the peak of the barn,
the hook where they used to hang the pulley
when it was time to put up hay.
All Tinnie had to do was cluck
and the mule, ever a grace to watch,
would step away from the barn and haul
the haystack up to the shadowy mow,
and Tinnie would take a pole from the ground
to poke the stack and get it swinging
like the pendulum of a tall clock
until it swung into the mow,
and by some knowledge it had the mule
with further grace stepped back,
the rope went slack and the stack was gone.
The mule went on like that all day,
pulling up and stepping back
as stack after stack swung into the barn.
You'd think the barn was eating time,
but I've had other thoughts as well,
the figure of Tinnie May poking
a pendulum of hay to prod
along an afternoon of time,
for us to learn that it's alive,
as if all it needed was a poke
and then you'd see it moving, time
rigged up at the top of the barn by a rope
passed through a pulley and hitched to a mule
Tinnie May called Tick, old Tick,
the mule who could travel back and forth
in time, as if time was his dominion
and he passed through it like a king.

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