

Stone, American Gothic

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American Gothic

after the painting by Grant Wood, 1930

John Stone

Just outside the frame
there has to be a dog
chickens, cows and hay

and a smokehouse
where a ham in hickory
is also being preserved

Here for all time
the borders of the Gothic window
anticipate the ribs

of the house
the tines of the pitchfork
repeat the triumph

of his overalls
and front and center
the long faces, the sober lips

above the upright spines
of this couple
arrested in the name of art

These two
by now
the sun this high

ought to be
in mortal time
about their businesses

Instead they linger here
within the patient fabric
of the lives they wove

he asking the artist silently
how much longer
and worrying about the crops

she no less concerned about the crops
but more to the point just now
whether she remembered

to turn off the stove.

Grant Wood, *American Gothic* (1930)

Oil on composition board, 30 inches x 25 inches. Art Institute of Chicago.

