

HOME TO OSTIA

Come home to Ostia where no ship sails
Our quiet harbor. Finding fishnets burn
Dry on wharves and how our seaport fails

To serve an inland city, merchants turn
For coastal villages where commerce calls.
Touring the vacant marketplace, we learn

Carved wood decays, at shrines white plaster falls;
Austere or lusty, while mosaics break,
Cavorting gods go lame across thin walls.

Come, we shall watch them tumble in the wake
Of summer breezes, before sunlight trails
Down walks, along calm docks by whose mistake

We have, avoiding red flags flown for gales,
Come home to Ostia where no ship sails.

G. F. Keithley