

Painting the Barn

Ted Kooser

The ghost of my good dog, Alice,
sits at the foot of my ladder,
looking up, now and then touching
the bottom rung with her paw.
Even a spirit dog can't climb
an extension ladder, and so,
with my scraper, bucket, and brush,
I am up here alone, hanging on
with one hand in the autumn wind,
high over the earth that Alice
knew so well, every last inch,
and there she sits, whimpering
in just the way the chilly wind
whines under the tin roof—
sweet Alice, dear Alice, good Alice,
waiting for me to come down.

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