

Son of Goya

by Bill Yarrow

My father paints walls
My father paints walls
because the daylight is malignant
and his eyesight is benign
because dead trees mock him
because death's weather
courts him, because time's wife
spits through cracks

He has lost all worldly goods
all physical money. Where are
the friends to comfort his idleness
or cure his fear?
The accumulations of humanness
choke his breathing, yield no rest
All time is his
He paints his walls

The King has commanded
his demise, vowed to
make my father wear
an axe, to scissor
his eyes, set fire
to his skin, all to scratch
envy's initials on his heart
with a pebble and a rag

Because his nails are too short
his strength too weak
his breaths too hurried
his bones too frail

his heart unsure to take his hands
and paint their fates
he paints his walls
My father paints walls

On the walls are monsters
cities, men, gods. Murderers
pilgrims, a witch, a spy
Two rifles, a woman, a dog
in the sand. These I see
These he lives. Poor Father
Housed in a private darkness
Alone on another earth

I am not against the darkness
I can learn to live with restraint
but nothing moves here in the ink
and nothing speaks. Nothing speaks
in terror of its voice, nothing but
the oily voice of my father
animate in the darkness
where all things hold their breath

Last week I returned home
and entered the house of a deaf man
disenfranchised of patrons
beyond the vile hearing of the world
I entered the house of Goya the painter
self-abandoned, deaf to light
I entered the house and saw Goya
sitting in misery, swallowed by darkness

