

Lullaby · *Jim Gauer*

Dogs bark because the world is singing, and dogs
Love to sing, but they don't know the words.
The world sings itself to sleep with a long low song
About a cabin in a snowfield, wind mouthing the words.
And the snow slipping out to dance
In its footprints, not afraid
To dance and be seen here, not afraid to sing
Its slow wary song to the last of the sheep.
It's cold all right, and the world is out there
Like a woman in a flowing dress, like a peasant in a fable,
Humming a song of fear your dog
Would love to know the words to, so happy
The song is singing him he won't believe
That harm is meant, so trusting of what
The world says he can't tell *joy*
From *danger*: your dog who loves
The bones of things, your dancing dog
At the frightening window, your dog
Who barks and sings along
By chewing the bouncing ball.
The bouncing ball, the boots you were wearing, the bones
Of where your sheep were going
When the night lost count.
And the fire lying down to die
When the dance is over, not ashamed
To die and be frightened, not ashamed to fear
The few cold notes it carries
Back into the silence, that singing
In its darkened bones that you would know
Nothing of, while your dog knows every word.