

Jeffrey Bean

THE JOY OF PAINTING

Before bed, I'm watching Bob Ross
(you know, the painter guy with the 'fro)
and I notice the sun spots on his hand
as he swirls with the fan brush. And those spots
make me think how he is going to die someday
(actually, I realize, he *is* dead by now) and that
makes me think an old, tired thought: how my baby
upstairs asleep will grow up to die, and by then
if things go as planned I'll be dead and my wife
too, but tonight on TV Bob Ross is happy
and alive, using odorless paint thinner, saying
let your imagination run wild and let it go,
here, you can do anything that you want to,
and he's making a huge mountain struck by light,
and in the face of this and the death all over
his hands, I'm drinking warm milk and hoping
I can drift off to sleep without trouble. And Bob
is washing his brush now, and drying it, saying,
just beat the devil out of it, and now he's painting
a happy little tree, almost like the one he imagined.