The Naked Man Paints his Closet

He picks the coolest day in a hot August. But hot enough in there, anyway, what with The closed space, the light bulb, and smell Of paint. And self: as he works, what funk He started with doubles, trebles, squares Itself. By now he’s squatting to fill in The bottom third, paint on thighs and arms.

A Whitman, how he savors smells he plans To rid him of. He shoves brush onto plaster For the last time; emerges from his smell Museum into plain air. Unfair, it makes Its accusations. So he surrenders: gives Up earned odor in the shower of the norm. His closet, drying, sighs as after love.

John Ditsky