

2nd equal, Poetry

Alison Dawson

I live near Oban in my retirement from life as a hill farmer's wife and enjoy gardening, hill walking (with collie, of course!), cooking for friends, choral singing and writing short stories and dabbling in poetry.

The Hill Dog

With focus clear, intense, determined
Scanning the tops, hunting the strays.
Clearing the scree to the shepherd's whistle
Over the skyline to stream down the braes.

And always the eyes, steady, watchful.

High in the snow and the driving sleet
Merciless winter tightens its hold.
Searching the corries for tups gone missing.
Ice-covered rocks and bone chilling cold..

And always the eyes, steady, watchful.

The outrun's wide for a marking gather
cannily lifting the pairs from the crags.
Cacophonous ewes and bewildered lambs,
innocents herded to the knife and the tags.

And always the eyes, steady, watchful.

The fank gate's closed, it's time for home.
Footsore and hungry, tired through and through.
The hand dropping down acknowledges labour,
The nudge of the nose accepts its due.

And always the eyes, steady, watchful.