

Whitewash

It was chalky and watery
in my bucket, and I became
ghostly as I painted down
from the flat Mexican roof
and up from my cocked ladder.
They called me *la fantasma*
de Monterrey, the lady ghost.
But I cleaned up nicely
at evening and even
my well-intentioned covering-up
of cinder blocks could not last long.
Think of the China Wall
as only a temporary stay
against invaders.
It is seen from the moon,
or someone said so.
I can only swear
that you are gone,
but you do not wash off
so easily at the end of the day.

Carol Hamilton