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The Savior of Zvenigorod

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The Savior of Zvenigorod

*For Andrei Rublev, upon learning that one of his icons
was discovered in a barn.*

Lowling of beasts, soft brood of light on hay.
Yes. A barn marked him from the start of things.
It's no surprise he would have it this way.

For centuries, the hay loft steps held, beheld his gaze—
watching over the comings and goings, the groaning,
lowling of beasts. See now: the soft brood of light on hay

each morning as the eastern door swings to greet the day,
to move the cows to milk, to make the milk pails sing.
Tell yourself it's no surprise—he would have it this way.

An unlikely find in an unlikely place—
the milkmaid fell from her stool at his showing,
beneath the lowling of beasts, the soft brood of light on hay

hanging a halo around the Savior's head. How to say
he hung above, yet below? On a board's belly, rising—
say it plain. It's no surprise he would have it this way:

A stair board made from an icon—that is to say,
the *deesis tier*, the painted prayer, aloft the confessing
lowling of beasts, soft brood of light on hay. (Say, oh say!)
—It's no surprise! He would have it this way.

SARAH CROWLEY CHESTNUT