

“The Shepherd Boy Painter”  
by James Baldwin

One day a traveler was walking through a part of Italy where a great many sheep were pasturing. Near the top of a hill he saw a little shepherd boy who was lying on the ground while a flock of sheep and lambs were grazing around him.

As he came nearer he saw that the boy held a charred stick in his hand, with which he was drawing something on a flat rock. The lad was so much interested in his work that he did not see the stranger.

The stranger bent over him and looked at the picture he had made on the rock. It was the picture of a sheep, and it was drawn so well that the stranger was filled with astonishment.

“What is your name, my boy?” he said.

The lad was startled. He jumped to his feet and looked up at the kind gentleman.

“My name is Giotto,” he answered.

“What is your father’s name?”

“Bondone.”

“And whose sheep are these?”

“They belong to the rich man who lives in the big white house there among the trees. My father works in the field, and I take care of the sheep.”

“How would you like to live with me, Giotto? I would teach you how to draw pictures of sheep and horses, and even of men,” said the stranger.

The boy’s face beamed with delight. “I should like to learn to do that—oh, ever so much!” he answered. “But I must do as father says.”

“Let us go and ask him,” said the stranger.