

Fade to Paint

By Adair Broughton

He was devoured by the hunger of word, the need to feast on language. He craved books and how they could make him feel. They were drugs, often unsafe and unclean, injecting him with other people's spirit, desires and wishes that also provided a freedom and disassociation from life, a doorway into possibility. Fiction merged with fact. He lost track of time as his eyes channelled stories into his consciousness that fed an imagination only other people could create. He could not remember a time without reading. Life was empty without the printed pulp. Often, to the detriment of friendships, he would stay in his room, maturing to lonely nights and word rather than proms and stolen kisses.

Now an adult, he surrounded himself with books. The bookshop was a constant burden and struggle to finance, managing to keep afloat from the people who were glad to purge their homes of long forgotten paperbacks that had slowly accumulated and absorbed space. He tried to read everything that came into his shop; spare minutes were the same as spare hours, all serving the same master. Each book was a small bible, something he could worship. Books were his life.

Gradually, bitterness encroached on his passion of the turning page. He had no stories for himself, nothing to say. He had tried so hard to write; a memoir, a short story, a political essay and even a horror story. It always ended the same way. The words were messy, congealed and languid. There was no rhythm or structure. It felt like swimming in honey without the sweetness in which to drown with failure. Words of teachers haunted him. 'You write history essays like English essays, English essays like history essays.' He had never managed to formulate a style, never leaping the first hurdle to set him on his path to literary accomplishment.

He was a slave to other people's expression, unable to ascertain where he was failing, why his attachment to words was a one-way street. He hated the fact he could take and not give. It burnt into his soul and words became a torment. He began to stare into space instead of pages, his mind drifting with melancholic failure. There was no pleasure of pulchritudinous prose to soothe the despondency that seemed ever increasing. What was once anodyne was now the very cause of unhappiness.

He felt betrayed by self and dejected by derelict discourse of his own failings. All he had wanted was to give something back and belong to the world that for so long had defined who he was. He could not escape from the chains of success other people had bound him with. He could not disengage from the limited perspective he had placed on the importance of word. People didn't write for pomp and circumstance but to share intimacies and thoughts, creating alternate worlds and realities, to become absorbed in showing other experiences. It was a way of release and he did not have that valve to release pressure. He took it personally that he could not do that. It hurt.

He became forlorn at first but then disquiet seemed to merge into a silent animosity for those who could still enjoy books. It was not a good trait for a bookkeeper. He did not know if the customer could sense it but he didn't care, the shop was failing. It appeared other people too had grown tired of words.

He could not see that the sour environment scared people away. People found a solace in bookshops; the quiet, studious atmosphere was a time for recollection and gentle perusal of long forgotten titles and hidden gems. It was a small way out of the city while staying within its walls. The bookshop was a commune, a clandestine meeting. Now, most would not come back. Its charm had disappeared to the austere. The dusty escapism became a tomb and nobody wanted to be trapped in sullen suffocation.

This was not instantaneous and had only gradually happened. He was reading less and found more time to drink at a local bar. The smoke filled air acted as a mist within which he could escape. The red wine helped him forget the time that ticked away. Time was once the rhythmic motion of his eyes scanning a page from left to right. Now time was inane background chatter and cigarette butts being emptied into ashtray.

He found the spoken word as difficult. There was no fluid way he could express himself but without realising it, he became mysterious. People knew what he did and stereotype had read all the books for him so they considered him wise but unapproachable. He was given respectful nods as he entered the bar. Silence was a good companion. His aura soon became attractive.

He had seen her before. She carved smiles from darkness for him, teasing a reaction that he never gave. He noticed her dismissal of other men's advances. Something in the far regions of his mind forced him to believe this was because of him but there was no listless arrogance within him to believe that was anything other than wishful thinking.

Their eyes would meet across the hazy bar and he began to worry about the obvious, that she could read his thoughts and become nervous of his intentions. His thoughts were innocent, even though images of her remained in his mind long after he closed his eyes in preparation for sleep.

He drank more, whether to numb the pain and disconsolation of losing a major part of his life or to spend more time in the bar on the off chance she would be there he could not surmise. He enjoyed the sickly feeling she gave him, the nervousness created even at a distance. It was new to him, unique and uplifting even if it had a semblance of trepidation built into its foundations.

It happened suddenly, a smile elongated into a few short words. They sat down and drank, the one thing they had in common. She seemed interested in what he said, listened to him as if he was an oracle outside of time. Yet he knew implicitly he was stuck right in the centre of past and future, and somehow, he felt bonded to that moment. That day, it felt less of a trap. She was easy to talk to but he still couldn't tell her how he really felt. He didn't want to cross a boundary that would ruin the attachment and comfort growing between them.

He would write her a letter, a last chance for himself, his first gift to her. If words could not be formed now, he would seek a different life. The unknown beckoned. The wine gave him belief he would not fail; she gave him warmth that ignited hope.

She nurtured superlatives in his mind that could not bleed onto the paper no matter how much they flowed through his veins. The strong passionate red of her lips drew him close, her perfume stronger but more subtle than the smoke filled bar. He recalled the delicate feel of her hand when they had accidentally touched in shadow, how cold it felt but also how right, an illicit delight. He wanted her to read his thoughts, to see what he felt. He needed to find words now because he was not just failing himself.

Sentences were written, and then paper became crunched and curled then aimed at the bin, gradually overflowing with the crumpled pale flesh of a tree that had now died for no reason. Still he did not despair, this had to be perfect and it had to be within him. What was left in a person without belief? The words would surely come, materialising like a ghost from a memory of all he had ever read.

He closed his eyes, imagining every delicate touch, how her breasts rose and fell with each subtle breath, the momentary stirring of air from the gentle exhale of a rising chest. He pictured how her hair seemed to shine in the dull lights of the bar, how even though it was night time her eyes seemed to be chiselled from daylight.

What did she see him in? He felt unattractive next to her, undeserving of the attention she saved solely for him and that seemed a horrible burden to bear. It was as if she saw a different person and the faith she showed in him deserved reward. He wanted to find the hidden treasure she had to believe existed. Only a barren landscape lay ahead. He still had no words.

Slowly the frustration screamed for release. He was becoming angry, the one feeling he could not associate with her, threatened to corrupt him. He would have given up every book he had ever read just to be able to write a few sentences with which she would melt. It had always been hard for him to cry but now harder not too.

That small release splashed onto the ink. A lone sentence stood out like the weak warrior it was. The pen was mightier than the sword? He had wanted to slash the paper back into atoms. Instead, he watched the letter smudge from that single tear that fell. The dark ink enticed other letters to merge together, to ruin what had already failed. The city of words he had lived in for so long would not even accept a brick of his own. He felt the world crumbling down around him with his own temple the first to fall. He had not even managed to provide one solitary sentence.

He watched the pattern of ink form on the paper, as the dark stain and tear swam through hidden fibres and circled out. It held his gaze; he could even find beauty in his ruined words. It took him far away, seeking metaphor but finding only stained paper. It seemed beauty was everywhere but within himself. He placed the pen down carefully, the fountain pen passed down through a generation. He was always going to write with that pen and now it was over, a failed dream. Decades of hope had converged into one full stop of failure.

He picked the inkpot up, a tempest within screamed at him to throw it at the wall, to be rid forever of the demon that tormented and confined him to the cage of despair and frustration.

He thought of her pretty face, how calm she made him feel when he stole images of her at odd times of the day. He thought of the contours of it, the lines etched in marble enticing and urging him to gently touch and caress the marble cheekbones. If only thoughts could be absorbed through touch he would not have to write this letter.

He succumbed to the feeling of how she made him want to brush her hair from her face and rest it behind her ear, then see her look up and smile and to know he could be her mirror. Her eyes were dancing devils that contained sprites of fire, of something cheeky and unknown. There was a vibrancy of life and it was contagious as well as intimidating. He felt all he could do was disappoint. Men had no reason for angels except to admire from afar. Because he could not distil his thoughts onto paper it proved she was different, a gulf separated, dimensions apart.

He picked the pen up, slowly dipping it in ink. There were no words now, no attempt to force language that could not form naturally from the range of emotions she provided. He had never pictured anyone so clearly in his mind before. He was not struggling for words because the image itself was enough. He began translating the images to paper, possessed, unable to stop and think about what he was doing, not realising how effortless this all seemed. He wanted it on the paper instantaneously, but not in a panic. He felt a flow, a smoothness of motion his body and mind had never before experienced.

She appeared on the paper slowly, a vague outline that became more distinct and lifelike with each movement and sleight of his hand.

He could not describe how that made him feel. It was not arrogant of him to know how good that picture was, how much depth and character he had produced with ink, how real it seemed. He stared at her picture, the small portrait of one colour that seemed as deep as an evening sky, where the lighter blue of the horizon meets the black of night at the time of dusk. He was shaking, from release or shock he did not know. Words had vanished from his mind, only to be filled with pictures, images that floated and of wonderful colours that had been missing all his life. It was the presence of a new sense, a new experience that seemed spontaneous but life changing. How had it all lain hidden for so long, without cultivation. Words seemed fallow. He had lived through a drought without knowing it and now the rains of many seasons fell at once.

A mist had been lifted. Where words had struggled the pen could flow but in a different path to anything he could have envisaged. He would paint her portrait, full size. He would let her come back to his apartment and show her the finished result, declare how he felt and kiss her for the first time. Happiness was more than just the absence of pain, it was the realisation of creation and that he had a gift to give, hidden for all these years behind description and formulated language rather than the essence of something more subjective than a universal truth, which was art.

Words were for people who failed to see. He was an artist. After one picture he could call himself that. He was able to express all those feelings without having to describe them. Emotion was in each stroke of the pen. It was pure. He had changed, felt belonging for the first time in his life. He was someone. He had struggled with words because they had been blocking a doorway to something much grander. He had been

slow in removing that blockage but now he had, she had helped him find the bonding that was body and soul working in unison.

He spent the afternoon purchasing a canvass and some paints, asking basic advice at the shop he had found difficult to find. The city had so many hidden streets. It had reminded him of his own shop, another man struggling to make a living from what he loved. Did these shops really have to fight against closure so consistently? What did people do with their time if they did not read or paint?

He closed the bookshop for the next few days, his body possessed by a spirit that danced with his soul, entwined and twisting like a vine up his spine, but as a friend rather than a tormentor. It seemed to control him, but losing himself to it felt natural, that he was just finding out who he really was. It did not disorientate him even though the gift felt alien because its beauty was a price to pay. He could not suffocate from something so graceful. Nothing bad could come from this ability.

He lost his appetite, his hunger was now colour, of the direct and sharp vivacity the picture formed in his mind and appeared onto the canvass. It was a completely new language he had to learn, but it seemed like he had always known it, that this essence had been living in shadow until the right moment of light that could banish its cobwebs.

For the next two days he lived and breathed her image, pouring it from every pore, his naked torso, sinewy and in command of a source that had always been hidden, flowed with supple and intricate detail as if she was in the room and feeding her own self into the paint.

She was a spring of the freshest water that quenched a thirst more powerful and enticing than he had ever needed. His face battled between a relaxed and secret smile and concentration. She had come to life before him. The canvass was a source of power and need. There was no greater accomplishment than creating beauty so readily and so personally.

His life had changed within forty-eight hours, but looking back it had changed within seconds. From the first moment his steel grey eyes, the colour of battleships missing a war, had found hers, he had felt something different inside. The ominous seed of destruction had become a beautiful flower, crystal clear waters to bathe in, sparkling with the iridescence of reflected sun. Whatever fears had been contained within him had evaporated with each stroke of the brush. Bitterness dissipated to nothingness. That particular void felt serene. Clouds dispersed, sun shone with angular rays of golden dream, rain too became a ghost in the city for those few days.

He knew her faith had paid off, but the gift of the portrait was actually a gift to him from her. Without her he would have died an unwritten death. Just as he was the mystery to her, she was the enigma to him. He felt fate grasp him hard, as if they belonged together, that his whole life had been heading towards this moment.

He would be in awe of her, a dangerous feeling to have for companionship. He dismissed any feelings of fortuity and sat down in front of her portrait, unable to disengage from the bewitching portrayal of perfection created on canvass. No flaws

existed and he found no faults. Somehow, he had created a visual representation of how he saw her, of something greater than a photo.

Books came back to him. Specific quotes and phrases he had once deliberately committed to memory, now felt like loose cannons that could produce noise and seem powerful but were small acts of destruction rather than pillars of wisdom in the nascent. He was purging the words he had once felt were genius into normalcy and highlighting their diluted self-aggrandisement. How little he had known.

One writer had said the universe was made up of stories not atoms. He felt both the Greeks and the writer were wrong. The universe existed as picture. It was something trapped within the great electromagnetic spectrum of light, more consciousness than colour. He had been so naïve. To think that it took thousands of words to create a world and a story where one painting could achieve that whole landscape of thought.

And now he was back in the bar, three days after creating two pictures. He had kept the large canvass hidden, to add some mystery to the unveiling. 'I've missed you' were her first words and he knew then that he had done the right thing.

A few hours later they were entering the bookshop. He was once so proud of this place, of each book he kept. Now he felt embarrassed to walk through the dusty shop and up the stairs to the back room where creation of his own universe had occurred. He held her hand, could feel it shaking. 'Why would she be nervous?' He turned on a light realising they had gone through the shop in darkness. He could understand why she was worried. At least they were here now. His own hands started to shake.

"I have something to show you."

"Oh really", she smiled back, but the smile was not genuine, half intrigue and half fear.

It wasn't meant to be like this. It should have been pure and natural. They belonged together.

"Yes. Just go through. You'll see it. I'll stay here"

The woman entered the room as a child would a haunted house. She turned on the light just as the door closed behind her. She liked his mystery but there was something powerful hidden behind his eyes that she had never managed to tame into a character trait. She wanted to understand him, his story, his history and now weeks later she had been given that opportunity. He was strange but not uncomfortable, that was why her nerves felt out of place, he was more tangible than instinct.

She looked in the room, a few paints littered on the floor. There was an ink drawing on the table but that was all. Some old sheets covered something at the back of the room but she dismissed that. She should not pry.

Tentatively she walked towards the piece of paper, the strong blue ink forming character even before she could see detail. Instinct already informed her who was on the paper. For a simple ink drawing she was in awe. She saw herself, as she had never

done, as beautiful. There was miraculous detail even down to the small lines by the side of her eyes she had recently grown to hate as a sign of ageing. Somehow, they belonged in the picture, were made to seem beautiful. He had taken away her feeling of age while producing a stunning replica of her face. She had found her mystery. His strangeness was what all talented people had. It was uniqueness and the understanding of a greater awareness that was forever lost to the outsider.

She found it hard to take her eyes off the paper but she felt rude not going to see him. He had been nervous too, of her reaction. She could sense that in hindsight. She smiled to herself, to him and to the picture, placed it back on the table and walked with greater purpose back to the door. She had given no second thought to what the paints were for.

“I love it,” was all she had time to say before their lips embraced and merged in ways and patterns their bodies would spend all night trying to duplicate.

The morning was the still calm after a storm. Her head rested on his chest. She could tease words from him now, not worry about his silence knowing he had an artists mind and could lose himself to other worlds so easily. She had to respect that. One picture had made her feel like a complete woman.

She asked to see some of his other work, surprised at his answer when he said that was all he had done. Then they spoke of dreams, of moving away from the city, living in the countryside and painting landscapes for income. He told her the business was a struggle. She liked that honesty. Then those thoughts became quiet dreams for each of them.

The pregnancy saved them.

She had never felt as close to someone while feeling so distant. She constantly told herself it was the pressure of him finding income and because he was an artist living in such a grey city doing something he had no love for. She wanted him to paint but neither of them went back into that room. Her relationship felt like a piece of paper until the baby had appeared.

With swollen stomach he came and sat down next to her, his hand resting on her belly. He told her of his idea, that he had found someone to buy the bookshop after a chance conversation. The city prices would be enough to fund a nice cottage in the country. He would have to find work but they would be able to survive better there than they could at present. She thought about her baby, running round with fresh air and nature. There was no decision to make that had not already been made those months before.

The cottage was old but character is added by years. He worked hard on the inside, creating a home, varnishing wood and building a fireplace. Neither of them had many trinkets or valuables that could clutter and obstruct. By the time he had finished the last coat of paint on the outside, cries of the baby became a harmony of delight. He lay in bed listening to his wife breathing and soft gurgles from his newborn son. He knew his life was perfect because of what he had created on that large canvass over those two days back in the city of rain.

The books had been a burden and painting had liberated the chains of unhappiness.

She lay in bed listening to the breath of the stranger she was married too. She thought back to that piece of paper, what a beautiful thing it was that had carried her away on dreams of chance. She had no regrets, a beautiful son lay close by but it was funny how much power that one piece of paper had held. She would persuade him to paint some more now that they had settled down into their new home.

Things were meant to be perfect so why did the night seem like a lifetime. Thoughts raced through her mind about the different world she had entered, that the man had taken her too. The area was idyllic, the air fresh and the views were a smothering of green that charmed life. It was heard in every bird's song or in the calls of the creatures of the night. It was the perfect backdrop for sleep.

The serene and the still enveloped her, caressing a body constantly tired. But still she could not sleep.

She rose carefully from the bed, thinking of the cool night breeze and the stars that patterned the roof of heaven above. Maybe she would feel less enclosed if her eyes could reach to the furthest points of space. She thought of her place in the world, of who she was, of fate and of love. She had the answers for none. She stepped outside to the welcoming night. The moonlight was strong, something she had never really noticed in the city. For a few breaths she felt at peace.

That calm was quickly broken. The shed door was unlocked its banging making her start. There was no wind and she wondered how it had closed. Fear seemed alien since the time she had entered the backroom of the bookshop. She walked over to the shed realising she had never been in it before. Pushing the door open she was surprised by what she could see, the moonlight creating a pale sun, light without warmth.

In the middle was the same wooden stand covered by sheets, that she had seen in that backroom of the bookshop. Here it had pride of place. It was impossible to resist looking although the hairs on her neck were now standing on end. She found it hard to walk towards it, intuition telling her to stay away. Why was she fighting a picture?

The backdoor of the porch swung closed with a now existent breeze. She looked round knowing that this time it was the wind. She could not explain what she felt, a fear of everything or a fear of the absence of fear. She stepped forwards.

The man listened to her leave the room, her soft footsteps and gentle creaking of floorboards somehow comforting, showing the care she held for hi, that she did not want to wake him or her son. He heard her open the porch door, probably in need of some fresh air. He felt warm and cosy and only half awake. He had to stay in the room in case their son woke. He would leave her to thought and she would return soon enough, nestled in his arms.

A gust of wind slammed the porch door. He wanted to climb out of bed but his eyes felt so heavy, like a robot without oil, his whole body stiff in movement. He felt

something pressing down on his chest, forcing him back to sleep. He could not move and knew there was something he had to do, someone he needed to protect. He could remember none of that when he woke to the bright sunlight streaming through his window, the cries of hunger from his son a few hours later.

She took a step nearer knowing there must be a painting beneath, that it must have been done back in the city. She remembered the paint pots that had been in that room, smiling at her forgetfulness in placing any significance on them. She did not know how long she stood there, her outstretched arm without the energy to remove the sheet. Why did she feel like this? It was just a picture. It was only strange because he had never mentioned it. Had he thought all along that she had seen it?

She removed the covers draped over the stand. What she saw made her gasp. A cry of silence ensued from her mouth. She became like a statue, an unknown force smothering her being. She saw herself. Was this painting what she was meant to have seen back in the city, rather than the piece of paper? That had only been a sketch and its magnificence a shadow of what she saw now.

She could not describe it. The stranger asleep in bed had created something so lifelike that she was in awe of him all over again. This magnificence should not have been covered. It felt like she was drugged, the picture beckoning her closer, studying every detail of her as she did it. Colours swamped her. Her own image made her feel insecure. Did she really look that way, that beautiful?

The moonlight was so strong; the reflected sunlight turned moonbeams hurt her eyes. She leaned closer, feeling a grip on her arms. No one was there. What was this? She felt panic as more colours entered her vision. Something was ripping her apart slowly but without pain. She touched the painting and felt as if her body was disappearing in front of her. She felt light now but with an urgent need for air. She tried to turn round but a weight pressed her to the painting. Something this beautiful was destroying her. She felt her mind drifting off to safety, leaving her body behind. She thought of her son and of the man whose arms she had found peace from for the first time in her life. She wanted this to be a dream.

She needed to run away but she couldn't move. Her whole body was numb, her mind telling her to move away from the picture, to move away from the man, of hidden danger. She couldn't see her portrait now, but she saw colours all around her. She needed rest, to lie down, to think of nothing. She loved the man but what had he done to her. Why was she like this?

She felt the first rays of sunlight exchange places with moonlight. Someone would save her soon.

The man held his son in his arms, watching him drink the powdered milk of life. Usually his son was breast-fed but he could not find her anywhere to offer that milk of human kindness.

He had searched everywhere, even the shed. He had a vague recollection that he had heard her in the night but he wasn't sure. None of her clothes seemed missing so she could not have gone far. He had forgotten to put the cover over the painting and

worried about the sunlight striking it, destroying the essence of it, photon by photon, small missiles that faded everything.

He walked from the shed and called her name, still with his son now asleep in his arms. Only the birds answered although even those seemed more subdued than normal. For the rest of the day he expected her to come back at any time, as if she had just journeyed to the shops. He began to worry in the evening but she had no family he could call. She had never mentioned them and so he had no numbers to try and contact.

A day turned into two and still she was nowhere to be seen. He saw nobody to question and nobody came to him with news. Two days became a week and still she was gone. His searches increased. He walked huge distances, searching every nook and cranny, every mound of earth for clues. Nobody at the shops mentioned anything about seeing her. Something kept him from asking if she had been into town.

He checked the shed again, had sat down and cried when he thought he heard her name. He could not bear to look at her picture and walked out, this time locking the shed. The week became a month and he felt he should contact the police but then they would ask too many questions and all he wanted to do was care for his son, so he dismissed that idea just as quickly.

She was gone and the hardest part was that he did not know why. Pondering that would have no resolution. He should have sensed it when things felt perfect. He could only believe it was something he had done. Why would a woman leave her son?

It took three years before he could face looking at her picture. His son was talking and had asked about his own mother. All he could do was show his son the picture. His small hand reached out to the canvass and touched the delicate features that had soaked into the canvass for nearly four years. He could not deny his son a mother as she had done that herself. He ached for her; the dark chasm of need had never lifted. He placed the picture at the top of the stairs, to let his son see her everyday. He had to hope she would come back. There was no sudden point he let go. He secretly hoped too but he had to be strong for both their sakes.

Seasons changed and he began to lose himself to paintings. He found them a darkness within him he could retreat too; find the same demon of possession that had willed him to create the picture for her. Images swam in his head, as if he was capturing snapshots of other worlds and other people. The paintings felt dangerous even to him. He gloried in their creation and sensed a power that could not be controlled. He would not let his son near them, as if it was the paintings that had given him hope but then destroyed him afterwards. He could not risk losing his son.

The shed became his life. He drank heavily the days after a painting was complete as if he could purge himself of what he had done. He began to speak less, losing himself more and more to painting. His son was doing well in school, meeting lots of people, good grades. He didn't want to interfere with that.

He began to communicate less because art was about giving, what else was there to say. He saw art as a provision of free wealth and that he was one of the special ones to

have found this gift. He thought no more of his books and had closed that chapter of his life. He forced himself to think less about her but knew that was impossible. He just hoped she was safe. He could forgive. Would she have stayed if she had not had the baby?

He found he could sell the pictures by driving to different villages, and the money was just enough to pay for life's necessities. His son did not go without even though he himself led a frugal existence. They had their own lives, just happening to share the same space. Sometimes he knew his son was watching him paint and he wanted to talk to him, explain the history of his mother but he knew so little himself. Silence was often better at explanation. The paints created his world and existence.

Each picture seemed to steal a piece of his spirit, a little of his soul disappearing onto canvass. Maybe that's where madness and greatness stems from, the losing of the mind, leaving behind life in a natural and more naked state, like the peacock without its feathers, having to find beauty from somewhere else, after relying for so long on what was given without work.

He felt he was creating something bigger and larger than himself with each painting. He was providing eternity. He felt pride in seeing people stare so deep into his pictures that they felt they belonged there and subsequently he never failed to sell them. He drove far away to sell them, finding small villages and towns hidden even from maps. It was like he wanted them pushed away from him; they were too dangerous to remain close. It was silly he could feel this, but he acted on it, trusting instinct.

His son had grown up, as had the distance between them. Why had it taken twenty-five years to realise no bond existed between them. Who was to blame for that? He knew the answer. He had not wanted to give his son the same dark chasm of loss that perpetrated his life. He wanted her to be etched in his memory as something as pure as the picture, with only beauty as a description. He needed to show his son how much he meant and he only had the one way of doing that. He would paint him.

He sat on the chair, his son's favourite haunt, waiting for him to return. He had crossed a silent boundary. He mentioned about the painting to his son as soon as he was home and a shocked smile was returned, something with warmth that had been a long time in passing. And then some long forgotten words also came back to him, hidden with a paradox. His son went into the house, not sure what to say, but with a lighter step as if a large burden had suddenly been lifted.

He heard his son's door close and so he mumbled those words. 'I see a black light'.

Some words could describe things after all.