

The Painters

Someone has said that if you wish to write just sit down and write about anything. Start in; where? just anywhere? Yes if you feel that way and the continuity of your theme will flow forth. It is so many years ago now that it happened, too many years, and yet they seem as yesterday. In fact yesterday the intervening years vanished and once again it was spring, the roaring traffic outside was hushed, the quiet of the great art gallery was as something tangible to be felt.

This was the world of quietness and solitude where people moved and murmured in hushed undertones, where people did not move and stood immersed in thought, drinking from those paintings of a life that was gone but still lived, seeing for a moment the beauty the painter saw, living for a brief spell of life of swift release from strain and worry.

We had seen so much of art. Modern art, meaningless angles and jagged puzzles thrown at a canvas and stuck there by daubs of paint. Perhaps we did not appreciate the greatness of modern art, my friend and I. We did not find the restfulness that we found in other galleries, it reminded us too much of life outside of scraps of human dereliction scattered on the pavements of life.

Suddenly we were in another gallery and the staccato soft tapping of my French cane on the terrazzo flooring abruptly stopped. Looking at him and following his gaze I felt as if the years had been swept back. Here was a painting that held immortality. No great spread of canvas, no group of figures, just one central figure, that of a young woman standing by a roadside, one arm

outstretched and the hand holding a slim
tree, the other arm hanging straight by her
side. Fair hair curled over a wide brow and
eyes of blue gazed somberly down at someone
or something lower down. Not a beautiful
face but on it a serenity of spirit that
was beauty itself