



**Imagine**

Liquid eyes  
Intoxicated dreams  
Swirling in kaleidoscope fantasy  
Of graceful emotion

Distant eyes  
Enranced by visions  
Held Spellbound  
With fascination

**Jen**

**I**t was Daniel's wife who got him started watching these fool painters. It had been easier to give in to her than to fight for his football games. Now every Sunday morning he was

glued to the set watching these three guys.

They were like old friends now.

The first one was the heavy breather. Daniel sure got a kick out of him. He had frizzy, gray hair that looked like a

brillo pad. Daniel thought this guy had asthma or maybe a job moonlighting as an obscene caller. Once he told his viewers to talk to their paintings, and if people thought they were strange - it was OK. What a nutcase! Now he was inviting Daniel to "get a little crazy!" Daniel would take that advice when he saw Ruthie later today. She was one sexy lady. Sometimes he wondered if his wife knew. He thought she probably did. She had always known what he was feeling even before he did, to hear her tell it.

Daniel stood up and walked over to the table by the TV. He picked up the box of chocolates his daughter had given him for Christmas and popped a dark chocolate filled with orange cream into his mouth. The heavy breather had said good-bye and now the pudgy man who was

color blind was on. Daniel always got hungry watching this one. He related all his paintings to food. Once he declared that paintings were like vegetable soup, then paused as a look of hungry longing came over his face. Daniel had realized the man was color blind when he said most trees were not really green. Daniel finished off a nutty caramel as the man finished his Christmas version of vegetable soup.

Before the English man with the clicking false teeth came on, Daniel went into the bathroom to brush his teeth, dab on cologne, and check out the rakish smile he planned to greet Ruthie with. Feeling satisfied that she wouldn't be able to resist him, he flipped off the light and headed back out toward the TV. He paused at the table by the window and turned the picture of his wife, wearing her accusing look, face-down. He parted the curtains and looked out to see snow airbrushing a Santa and a Rudolph with a blinking, red nose. Daniel imagined he could hear the sizzle of the feathery flakes as they landed on Rudolph's nose.

Daniel let the curtain fall and went to his chair. He plopped himself down and saw this last painter busy with his usual tree and water scene. This guy was confused. He maintained that paper was water. He always told his viewers not to worry about trees or water, as long as they were warm and dry while painting them. He constantly cautioned his viewers to use "just a weeny bit" of paint. Daniel thought this clown ought to worry "just a weeny bit" about those teeth of his.

As the man clicked his good-byes, Daniel switched off the TV. It was time to go meet Ruthie. She

would be home from church now. Daniel's heart thumped as he thought of her snuggled next to him, her soft hair tickling his nose. After a last look at the overturned picture, Daniel left, quietly easing the door shut behind him.

Ruthie lived just two doors down. As Daniel raised his hand to knock, she opened her door, wearing only a lover's smile. He rushed into her arms, where he lay all afternoon, still whispering endearments as the falling snow brought an early dusk.

Later that afternoon.....

Peggy Burt wheeled Mrs. Fletcher out of her room and down the hall toward the dining room. As she passed rooms 36 and 38, she saw both doors were shut. She saw Donna, the charge nurse, at the nurses station and flagged her down. "Donna, Mr. Black and Mrs. Gooding are at it again. Should I break up the lovebirds and send them to dinner?" Donna smiled at her. "No, they know it's dinnertime. They won't stay too long and take a chance on us finding out their secret." Peggy laughed. "Besides Peg, they live for each other." "Ya, I guess you're right," Peggy said, smoothing Mrs. Fletcher's hair. "It's sad though, his wife has been dead a year and he still sneaks around." Donna smiled and shrugged. "Are you in the feeder room tonight Peg?" Peggy nodded. As she turned the wheelchair, she gave Mrs. Fletcher a pat and said, "See you there Donna." Donna waved and began humming Silent Night.

*Susan Davenport*

