

Faint forms of wonderful beauty were shadowed forth in his soul. The artist saw them in far-off perspective like bits of glass in a kaleidoscope. They glowed in pale, pure light, beautiful beyond imagining. In due time would the artist give them life, also, as he had given to this picture.

At last he was weary of waiting. Intense longing surged over him to see again his picture; for three days had gone since he had placed upon it tenderly the last perfecting touch. The artist never permitted himself to gaze upon his work while the fever of creating was on him. "Three days must go," said he, "to cool one's brain, and to clear the eye lest a man over-rate his work." Now, the three days were done.

The great artist went near, and stretching out his hand, slim and tremulous, he drew back the curtain. Wonder flooded his soul. He fell on his knees before the picture. Long and deep he gazed at its loveliness, searching eagerly for the dear marks of his handiwork, the faults that were his close companions.

There was no flaw in it anywhere. It was attainment. It was perfection. For a space the man was a god, with the high triumph of immortality in his soul.

Suddenly, like a darkening of the sun, the truth came to him, and he fell on his face in bitterness. The end of his striving had come. His work was perfect, and there was no more left in all the world for him to attain. The great artist wept like a little child. So, the critics found him, sobbing in bitterness of heart.

And because the man was a great artist, and because he had already enriched himself with the praises and offerings of his fellow men, he painted no more pictures.

—Miriam Van Waters.