

## An Artist and his Muse

His fingers were moving at a furious pace. All that he could see were his own colors and model in front of him. Each time his brush made another stroke on the canvas, the painting sprang forth more to life. He had never been scared of making marks. His art had an unusual force of creativity and realism entwined in them. To him Art was not about showcasing reality. It was something much more than that. It was about taking the real and suffusing it with an expression of his soul

She was standing there maintaining the same position for nearly five hours now. Why was she there? She did not know the answer to that question. To her he was a genius. To think her image will be preserved for posterity, praised by critics, yearned for one glance by art connoisseurs all over the world were reason enough to stand there for days. Yet those were not her reasons. She stood there because she wanted to watch him paint her.

Looking at a person is very different from painting that person. When he took the brush in his hand to paint her face he looked at her in a new light. He felt for the first time the brightness of her eyes, the soft flush in her cheeks, her curiously blunt nose, her parted lips and the delicate brown eye brows which required more intricacy than portraying a bird's feather. When he blended in those colors, his hand was simply weaving poetry on canvas that seemed to say

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate;"

She was perfect. Not perfect in the sense of beauty. Yet she was perfect for his intentions. Her face had a force. It was not chiseled to look like a Greek goddess yet it made a statement. When she stared at you, you could not reason with your mind and

walk away. You were compelled to stand transfixed there for what would seem like eons of time.

A man was standing at the entrance of a hotel lobby. Something about the painting had rooted him to that position for several minutes until the valise came for his luggage and shook him out of his reverie. "Who is this?" he asked, pointing towards the painting. "That is a famous painting called 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' by a renowned artist of the seventeenth century named Vermeer. Some people have stared at it for hours, Sir. It has that effect on people"

"Do you love me?" she asked with all the earnestness she could muster. "I do not attach myself to my muses dear", came the reply in a cold brutal voice. He collected his drawing material; his colors, his brushes, his canvas and walked away. She had been his life, his purpose, his goal for a fortnight. When his painting was finished, his curiosity satisfied, his soul sought a new quest... a new Griet