

twenty-odd years of my life have been a complete waste.”

What a thought! The old man leaps upon a soapbox, speaks his eternal wisdom, and retreats back into his cave never to be heard from again. It would happen sooner or later, wouldn't it? If it doesn't, would he find the satisfaction that had thus far eluded him some years later debating the same things he was debating now and had debated years before? What if, when he finally catches a glimpse of higher meaning from the debutante sitting next to him, she turns and explains that he has misunderstood her point entirely.

There was so much he had seen and missed, so much he had passed by without a second look. He never took time to smell the roses because he couldn't. John had never seen that the roses were there. *Let Vincent be the brooding, introspective hero*, John thought. He'd much rather play the faithful manservant that retired silently to the garden.

How he longed to tread upon those beaches which he had only read about and then insulted from being trite. Only when he walked on a shoreline without any thought but that of his next step would he know that he was free, but how to explain that to them? They will only exchange contemptuous glances, dismiss it as a joke, or laugh outright. *They can't understand. How can I make them understand? They'll never—*

A thin smile appeared on his lips and, in the middle of a brilliant and scathing diatribe against the cubists Vincent was delivering, he loudly cleared his throat. John waited until all eyes in the room were on him. Then, in a soft voice, he said "I'm sorry people, but you must excuse me. I have more pressing matters which require my attention."

He walked down the stairs and into the warm glow of the streetlight without even bothering to retrieve his coat.

The Country Quarry

If I could,
I would walk to the cliff
above the limestone quarry
stand on the edge,
and look down to the cold yellow floor.

I would take my stress,
fears,
inabilities, and
faults,
and form each into a crystal figurine,

and throw them
with all my strength.
Then watch as they float silently
down,
exploding into shards against
the floor.

--Clay Jones