# Picturing Utrillo

*by* Bill Yarrow

At him always, pestering him with unanswerable questions, why does he paint this, why doesn't he paint that, he doesn't know, he just paints, things that strike him, the things he sees, a dim shadow on a monument, twisted sunlight on an awning, the blue hieroglyphics of decay, a cat in the wine, the white endless façade of homes, the pink and grey of skies in love with loneliness. She watches as he stirs. Oblivious of everything, he rises, washes out his eyes, pours water through a spoon of sugar into his glass and begins to sip his pale-green drink. Absinthe makes the heart grow fonder. His canvas parts its lips and puckers. He grabs his Muse by the waist and pulls her toward him, presses his middle against her middle, his chest against her breasts, digs his fingers into her curls, pulls at the elastic of her blouse, her shoulders, suddenly, shockingly bare, her lower throat open to his open mouth, she's all a mess, dishabille, his hurried fingers take up the brush, a splash of paint, a daub of color, sips of silver, hatch of black, a wipe of white, lush squares of pastel tints, the second-story windows begin to form, enfeebled trees sprout up, the horizon is firmly planted behind the alley, around the corner, just beneath the burgeoning sky. What does this mean? *What does what mean?* Where are the people? *They have not yet been born.* Overhead, mawkish gulls begin to weep daylight into the marsh. The gutters blush as men in bloody aprons take their business to their walls. Priests in red robes bend their tonsures toward eternity, or so it seems to him, supine, head wedged against the bookcase, mouth agape, dreaming of fragrant dangers, feet splayed artlessly, legs perpendicular to the floor.

Available online at *«http://fictionaut.com/stories/bill-yarrow/picturing-utrillo»*
Copyright © 2016 Bill Yarrow. All rights reserved.