

The Model

by Jake Barnes

My art teacher hated Salvador Dali. I think he despised both the man and his art, I'm not sure. Nor do I know why he went crazy whenever Dali's name came up. He was an impostor, the little man said. A fake. His mustache would bristle. He glared at us under knit brows.

He was a good teacher. He let us do what we wanted to do, even if it was unconventional. The first thing I learned in the class was that I wasn't an artist. I couldn't draw. So I used mixed media to disguise my faulty eye; I wet the paper, used ink and water colors. I managed some interesting effects that way.

The model used to circulate among us on her break, eyeing our work. If she liked what she saw, she might stop and talk with the artist for a bit. If not, she just moved on to the next student's space. My abstract blurbs and blobs made her smile and nod her head.

I had mixed feelings about standing so close to a naked woman. I had never been in one's company before. It was exciting but disconcerting. At first it brought the color to my face and tied my tongue. As time went on, it became routine.

I wonder what happened to those good people? Walter, my teacher, is dead and gone, no doubt. I was tall, gawky teenager when I was a freshman in college. I'm sure the model is no longer with us either. Too bad. She was a good person. A good teacher in her own way.

