**‘Ellipsis’**

The smoke rises above tall towers. The streets perspire with black soot. Street lights spot the road, the only division between each meticulous street. Light is rare here, when it is found, it’s artificial.

At least… that’s what I think.

In the centre of this grim landscape lies a pearly white building. A gallery. Large in size, small in occupants. The walls within are blemished with works of art, some pre dating the renaissance, some the love child of a mad man. All are hung on display. To be felt but not touched. A picture paints a thousand words.

I am not a painting… I don’t think.

In the room the women come and go, talking of Michelangelo. The men follow them in loyal troupes, often sitting by me as they wait. Uninterested in the things they see. Vacant expressions line their faces. Examples of male ignorance sitting on display. The women muse among themselves, searching for meaning in each frame. Noses high in the air. Heels clanking across the marble hallway. Heavily powdered faces poised. They point their glove cladded hands to the painting of Lazarus.

“Seems as though he’s trying to tell us something.”

“Yes, indeed, like he’s risen again from the dead.”

“No dear. That is not what I meant at all; that is not it at all.”

Art is like poetry; it spouts from a platform of notions. No one truly knows the truth behind it. Not even the composer himself.

Perhaps there are many truths…

I do not know what I am. The women cross my path, staring up at me. Women, all with tales to tell, people to love, lives to live. The women come and grow around me as I remain static.

“They say it’s a symbol of existentialism.”

“Yes, a reference to Dante’s work.”

“Seems as though he’s just thinking.”

Thinking of what they’ll never know. The work that surrounds me is beautiful. Even without knowing my reflection, I know I am inadequate sitting beside them. They walk past me indifferently. Unknowingly gullible and uneducated. For they have not seen the things I have seen. The years that have passed in my stead. The age of my bones. But as the years passed, colour began to appear.

If I was a colour, I’d be grey… I think

Grey as the cool marble floor. Grey as the chains that bind each individual painting to the wall. Grey as the faces that appear before me, and the sky above me. Soon, the gallery occupants begin to dwindle into a mere dozen a week. No longer do the women come and go, talking of Michelangelo. In their stead, men take over. Men come to the gallery and treat it like an escape. Not an escape into the world of art, a place to find meaning and beauty, but an escape from the smoke that rises above the tall towers. From the streets that perspire black soot. From the women. From the cries of a thousand dead civilians. Their stone-cold faces share the story of their past. War stricken, dark and painful. Instead of searching for meaning within each painting their conversations grow tedious. Circling points already made.

Colour has disappeared.

If I was a colour, I’d be grey… I think.

The walls seem to close in on me. Each year passes another painting disappears. To where, I do not know. Lazarus no longer stares me down. The chains that held him dangle loosely, their reflection stark against the cool marble floor. Each painting moves on. But new art does not replace them. The walls remain bare and empty.

A picture paints a thousand words…

Vacant of life, the gallery itself a decaying soul, left to bleed out. Soon enough, apart from me, chains are all that remain. The artificial lights are turned off, never to be turned on again.

One day, I begin to fall apart.

It starts with a crack in my pedestal moving further up my body, threateningly. I begin to feel heavy and fragile. Parts of my body crumble to the floor. A hand cascades in a shower of dust beside me. My elbow cracks, succumbing to the pressure it falls to the floor. My legs concave from the weight and snap in two. These cracks within me expose a peculiar light. It shines bright, a yellow blinding stream.

I’ve never seen anything like it… I don’t think.

Stone tumbles to the ground with my body becoming lighter and lighter. This new found lightness exposes me. My eyes, cast downwards, no longer show me a grey marble floor. But a blue, translucent matter. Water, it surrounds me. This water shows me an image, a shape. It stares back at me, unblinkingly.

Like a reflection… I think.

My head falls to the ground. It cracks in two. A neat crack on the bridge of my nose. Both parts smash and splash into the ground. Shattering my new found reflection. The last piece of the puzzle. Never in my life had I wished to move more. I remember the women. Women, all with tales to tell, people to love, lives to live. The women that would come and grow around me as I remained static. I will my broken, stone sculpted legs to push against the pedestal. My eyes to look upward toward the cage that surrounds me. The walls have fallen, tumbled to the ground. But they may as well still be there. I stare down at the only thing I can see.

I’ve always wanted to know what I look like… I think.

I don’t see the love child of a mad man. I don’t see love at all. I see pieces of a broken man, who never truly understood who he was. As this new light shines upon my back, and the water flows below me I’ve never felt less alive. This man had no purpose, no place. The sensation awakens a thought inside me that I’d never had. I feel something fall from my right cheek and slide down past my chin splashing into the puddle below me, rippling my reflection.

I don’t recognise it.

I don’t think…

*‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’* by T.S Eliot made me aware of the abstracting and overwhelming thoughts of inadequacy as well as self-doubt presented through Prufrock as he physically can’t participate in human experiences. By experimenting with interior monologue, I was able to get into the psyche of a being that could only watch as life grew and changed around him. I attempted to observe modernist and romantic antinomies that I found in the poem such as observing/participating, informal psyche/ external society and romantic idealism/ modern realism. Over all, I chose to focus on the idea of thinking and not acting or being paralysed in thought. The narrator of my story was inspired by Auguste Rodin’s *‘The Thinker’* which is known as a symbol of existentialism and was a part of the *‘Gates of Hell’* inspired by the *‘Divine Comedy’*- Dante Aligheri. I created my own antinomy by creating a ‘Thinker’ that couldn’t finish a thought and was never sure of his own words, hence the title *‘Ellipsis’*. By expanding on setting I was able to display the degradation of the impersonalised city Prufrock finds himself in. By decided to locate my story in a gallery, I was able to simulate observation of a changing society. This setting is also female dominated therefore allowing me to expand on this idea sustainably throughout the story, referencing the poem and Eliot’s beliefs on women. Prufrock had a fascination with women, he revered them, but was frightened of them. I attempted to embed this aspect into my narrator. I also used the technique of pathetic fallacy through the relationship with the paintings and the women as an intertextual reference to Eliot. In regard to Eliot’s context the impact of war was included in my story. I struggled to figure out the ending of my story and it took me several attempts to convey the inadequacy of the narrator. I intended to shape my composition based on unique circumstances, coming from a voice no one had ever heard before.