

IAN BURGHAM

THE MAN WHO KNEW EVERYTHING ABOUT ART

At the party I was introduced to the critic, a writer of books on art. An expert on impressionists. With his wavy grey hair and artist's glasses over stainless-steel eyes, a scarf thrown carelessly about his neck and across his throat, I could tell he knew what he knew.

Patronizingly, he asked me what I did, where I lived. That day I'd been writing to come to terms with what I don't know, try to take some comfort from how the world is. I answered, "I live 'where the light is as darkness,' in mournful hearts, the minds of men."

It has been my lifelong infirmity to play the fool. But a madman is his own redeemer, can't miss an opportunity—continually talks out loud to himself, argues his own case, is his own referee, knows he's not important.