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creative writing
workshops

Eye of the Beholder

A 20 minute timed exercise

by Lou Beckerman

So who knows what the Turner Prize is?... Hmmm? Now, you're all in the art summer school so someone must know... Sally?... Really? Your mum took you – oh – she called it the turnoff prize - I see...

Well, I'll tell you then - it's named after an artist called Turner. Now he was a controversial figure and ... what's that?... Cont-ro-ver-shall. It means causing disagreement, or sometimes heated discussion. Now some people are of the opinion that the prize – worth MANY thousands of pounds is a lot to give out for what some people regard as a load of sh... er... well, perhaps not worth it.

Now THIS year's hotly tipped-to-win artist hasn't even given their name – rather deliberately it would seem so to cause even more speculation.

Now let me just show you a picture. It is apparently a distressed wall. But – is that all you see? You'll note the delicately peeled central image rather resembling a uterus. And this is supposed to have great significance. And may I just point out the delicately formed fallopian tube on the right, and just the beginnings of one on the left... One can, of course, admire the texture and form. Now, can you see the line representing the surface of the choppy sea? And the figure half-submerged? He's obviously going under. See how sensitively drawn it is. And towards the top of the image we see a brassiere hanging on a washing line. And notice the cool colour tones – the shades of puce. No Donna, not *puke*... And now, what mood or emotion do you think the artist is trying to convey... Is there some narrative you can glean from this image?... Anybody? Anybody? Don't be shy... Anybody still there??