

Pictures in My Mind

Annie Dixon's Story

By Laura Turner

Close your eyes. Go on. Just for a moment. I know you don't want to, but it's just a moment. I promise.

There. Darkness, yes? At first, all is darkness.

But, within moments - yes, mere moments - that all-consuming abyss begins to splinter. To spread out into so many different shades of colour and light. So delicious you can taste them.

Look, there! The sea-salt azure of a summer day's sky dances across the backs of your eyelids. And there, the sugar plum sweet pink of a blush on a young girl's cheek as she laughs, running across a field pierced with yellow flowers shining brighter than the sun.

That's what I see.

Well - what I saw.

I saw the world in a hundred thousand shades, every shadow made up of hidden shafts of violet, indigo, amethyst, lilac and mauve. And I can taste every single one, each shade sparking delight on my tongue. An echo of a memory from a time that came before.

Because now all I see are the pictures in my mind. The paintings I created - the portraits, miniatures, the endless faces that I sketched and shaded into life - they are just memories now. My eyes cannot see them anymore. Cannot see anything. Cannot see my reflection in the mirror, cannot see my hand before my face.

I cannot see you, and of course, so many years part us: you cannot see me. But a true artist can always feel. A true artist can forever sense the scope of the world - of a person - from a scent that crosses the air, or a sweet taste that passes their lips.

I paint pictures inside my mind now. Like you might paint a picture of me, I hope.

Annie Dixon of 40 East Street, Horncastle. Portrait artist, favourite of Queen Victoria herself. A daughter. A sister. A Lincolnshire lass whose work was exhibited at the Royal Academy!

And now, at the grand old age of 81, in the year of our Lord 1898, I am an old woman whose sight has long since left her. But the pictures - the pictures in my head remain.

Hold them close, the pictures you see. The way you see the world. The colours that bring it to life. They are yours: unique.

We are all artists, and those colours - they are your tools. Use them, to bring the world alight
- to make those pictures come alive.