

one evening I happened to look down and I saw, between the thickly clothed branches of the lime-trees, the woman of my dreams sitting in a neighbour's garden, nursing a baby, and rocking herself to and fro while she turned her childish features and pale blue eyes toward the house with an expectant smile. I sat at my window looking at this woman, some neighbour's recently married daughter no doubt, my thoughts in a flurry of fear, for she was just as I had imagined her. I wonder if I can make you understand that I did not want to imagine her at all, that I was helpless in the grip of my forebodings? For in the dream it was I who would come out of the drawing-room door on to the lawn, who would advance in an alpaca coat, put on after my return from business, a gold watch-chain stretched athwart my stomach, carpet slippers on my soft, untravelled feet, and would bend down to that clinging form. . . .

As I have told you, it was about that time that I left the *faubourgs* and went to live in a studio among artists. Without knowing it, I took the most certain method of depriving that woman of her power. Beyond the shady drives and prim gardens of the *faubourg* her image began to waver, and she haunted my dreams no more. And I was glad of this because at that time I was an apprentice to *l'art*, and there were so many things at which I wanted to try