

Andrea Del Sarto Quotations

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*"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?"*

Meaning:

A man should try to go beyond what he can achieve.

Description: Andrea says this to express that great artists aim high, even if they fail. True greatness needs risk and ambition. But Andrea admits he did not do this.

*"All is silver-grey,
Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!"*

Meaning:

His art is perfect but dull and lifeless.

Description: Andrea says his paintings are smooth and calm, like a silver-grey evening. But they lack energy, passion, and soul. He sees this as a failure.

*"I do what many dream of, all their lives—
Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing."*

Meaning:

He paints easily what others try hard to achieve.

Description: Andrea shows pride in his technical skill. Many painters suffer and try hard to paint like him, but they fail. Still, he feels his art is not great.

"Had you... but brought a mind!"

Some women do so."

Meaning:

He wishes Lucrezia had given him inspiration.

Description: Andrea blames his wife for not encouraging him to aim higher. He feels her beauty was not enough. She did not have the mind to lift his soul.

"In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—

Four great walls in the New Jerusalem...

While I have mine!"

Meaning:

He hopes for a new chance in heaven.

Description: At the end, Andrea dreams that in heaven, he will paint with great artists like Leonardo and Rafael. They had no wives, but he had Lucrezia—his final choice.

"But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,

And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,

And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird"

Meaning:

Andrea praises Lucrezia's beauty but wants more.