

Love at First Sight

by Steven J. Kolbe

Life ascends gradually—just like they always said. I stop counting on immediate transformations—the overnight best-seller, instant enlightenment—and instead focus on what I can do: Writing a little each day and making it to Mass on the weekend. I even give up meat on Fridays. Sort of. Gone are the days of the get rich quick schemes and learning Italian in a fortnight. At least for me. Life gets just a little bit better each day. Which is why, subconsciously, I think I had stopped believing in some of the good things too. Like miracles and apparitions. Like love at first sight.

I met you in a hospital, of all places. But isn't that just how it is with love? She cares not for timing or circumstance—and why should she? Aren't the best writings those that take you where you hadn't planned to go? No, love does not wait, she just appears—*ta da!*—and reduces you to rubble. “I used to be such a solid, upright person,” you think to yourself, but so you are no more. And that's how it happened with you too. In the moment I first saw you the inner roads of my heart were given extra lanes to accommodate all that I received.

I took you in my arms, embraced you, kissed you, bathed you—how intimate an act for strangers!—and found you a purple hat from a box of crocheted hats. There was a wastebasket there in the nursery and so I emptied out my wallet. I emptied out all my plans and ambitions, anything that would take me away from the miracle of you, and I dumped them there with all the other love-drunk fathers.

As you lay there under the warming lamp, I whisper-sung to you, my sweet, my heart, my gorgeous daughter:

I can't take my eyes off of you
I can't take my *eyes* off of you
I can't take my eyes off of you
I can't take my eyes off of you

I can't take my eyes off of you

I can't take my eyes...

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About the story: *A few days ago, I was searching through Spotify to find songs for our Bonnie Mix. I was flipping through anything that had “girl” or “Bonnie” or “daughter” in the title, when I came across this song by Damien Rice called “The Blower’s Daughter.” This track was made popular—at least to me—by the movie Closer, which I saw either my freshman or sophomore year of college. I had always assumed it was a song about a love affair, but in the context of this search I saw it as a love song from a dad to his newborn daughter. It knocked me over. Now, eventually, I went on to learn that the inspiration for the song was not in fact Damien Rice having a baby. However, the sentiment remained. And if I’m holding my daughter and these lines pop into my head, I still sort of lose it.*

