The Rose Bowl Queen

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"We as human beings have all experienced this sensation at one point or another in our lives. You know the one that speeds up your heart rate, ties your stomach in knots, and reduces your vocal ability to that of an epileptic during a seizure. What else but love could possibly have such an effect on you, other than chemical stimulants? It's more sudden than a heart attack for some, and as gradual as a snail for others, but in the end, the results are all alike. Sweaty palms, constant second-guessing and the overwhelming feeling that your breath either smells bad or you have something dripping from your nose. Nothing compares to the feeling love projects upon one's self and the first time you feel this sensation undoubtedly should be memorable."

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The love bug struck when I was nine-years-old. Her name was Laurie Merrill. She was an angel. Black hair, blue eyes and a voice as soft as the clouds. To this day I consider her one the most stunning and beautiful women I have ever laid eyes on. Shy, timid and absolutely afraid to speak to this girl, I was a pathetic sight. What made my feelings for Laurie even more difficult to profess was that I knew that she did not have mutual feelings toward me. This slight bump in the road, however, did not stop me from telling her exactly how I felt. For my situation, it was a matter of timing. I wasn't going to turn this into a recess romance; I wanted my declaration of how I felt about her to be special. With the assistance of my father, that is exactly what I did.

It was spring, and the flowers were in bloom. Stepping down from the bus one afternoon, I saw my father working in the yard. He already knew how I felt about Laurie, but he had no idea what I was about to ask of him. It was very simple; I wanted to be as romantic as possible, and what can be more romantic than flowers? With very little persuasion my father agreed to buy flowers for Laurie. I then proceeded to try on ten different outfits before I found one that felt right. A brown and black sweater, black slacks and black shoes; I looked sharp. My father, after waiting 45 minutes for me to try on clothes, drove me to a florist with whom he was friends. After deliberating on the type of flowers to buy, we decided on roses. Roses it certainly was, one dozen long stem red ones, wrapped in babies breath. Now that the easy part was finished, it was all up hill from here.

Once my father and I arrived outside Laurie's house my nerves were shot. I couldn't go through with it.

"Dad, drive away, drive away!" I yelled. I chickened out. My father didn't say a word, only smiled and drove me around Laurie's block about ten times before I calmed down enough to go through with it. We pulled up once again and this time I was ready. I got out of the car, checked my attire and walked nervously to her front door. My hands shook as I rang her doorbell, praying that she answered the door rather than her parents. My wish came true. Once she had opened the door entirely, the light from her lamppost shined on her face, giving her a portrait gleam.

"Laurie, these are for you, I hope you like them, because I really like you," I said.

"Thanks Joe," she replied, and shut her door. I did it; I couldn't believe it. But what now? How do I approach this girl in school tomorrow?

The next day in school was not all that different. I did, however, receive
a smile from Laurie when we first saw each other in class. I asked her a few weeks down the road what she had done with the flowers.

“I put them in a vase and put them on my mantel,” she replied. What else do you do with flowers? I wasn’t exactly sure what to expect from all of this. I had hoped she would have realized how much I cared for her, but perhaps it just wasn’t meant to be.

I still think about Laurie every now and then. She moved away a few years later, when we were in middle school. Occasionally she does come back to visit her friends, never to see me, though. I actually saw her two summers ago, still looking as radiant as ever. We didn’t speak but that old feeling came back, not as strong as it used to be but still there. It was more like a rush, not an adrenaline rush but the feeling that someone important was in my midst. Kind of like the feeling you’d get if you met the Rose Bowl queen.

-Joe D'Angelo