

Unremembered Loss

For all the news and information from the world of Rathrae, and for the story Unremembered Loss

Issue 94

June 2017

To See – For Awhile

June 15th

It's been almost thirty-seven years since I've seen anything. Tomorrow – if all goes well – I'll see again. I'm excited and I'm afraid. What if seeing isn't as good as I remember? What if it doesn't work? Will seeing make my life better or just different?

I remember greens and blues, the reds of a sunset. They say there's a ninety percent chance I'll see in color. That leaves a ten percent chance my mind won't know what to do with color and I'll just see shades of gray. I'm not sure if I could take not seeing color.

I need to get some rest – big day tomorrow. I hope I can sleep.

June 17th

Wow. Didn't think the surgery would take so much out of me. I was at the hospital at 9:15. They prepped me and I rolled into the operating room at 10:00. I imagined the room was all white, with machines with flashing lights on them – that's how operating rooms are described in videos.

I heard the whir of the air conditioning and felt the gentle breeze against my face. I heard a quiet beeping that I knew matched my own heart's beating. Soft voices talking, one telling me to breath deeply and count backwards from twenty. The sounds of people walking around the room, clothing swishing, metal tools being laid out on a metal table.

My own breath slowing as I counted backward. The computer reporting my stats. The hardness of the table I was laying on softening as I floated off.

June 19th

I'm a little afraid. I thought I was going to see four days ago, but there are

still bandages on my face. The doctor told be earlier today that tomorrow morning my eyes would be activated.

June 20th

Oh my! They've turned on my eyes. I can't see anything yet. My eyes are still "calibrating" and that's going to take a couple hours. Then they'll have to go through a charging cycle, then well see if they work.

Good news – bad news. The calibration is done. The charging is done. My eyes have been turned on. The first thing I saw was blue. Good news is that I saw color – and it was blue. But, that's all I saw – blue. The doctor said that is the color of the ceiling I was looking at so that's good.

Apparently my eyes and brain are still learning how to talk to each other. I've been assured that this is all normal. I don't remember reading about this in the documentation. Guess there's nothing to do now but wait.

June 21

Progress. When we turned on my eyes this morning, instead of seeing one color, I saw four blocks of color and as I turned my head they changed. Ten minutes later it was sixteen blocks. After a while it jumped to sixty-four blocks and when I closed one eye it changed. I'm going to have depth perception. Then my eyes turned off.

June 22

I saw my daughter face for the first time. If I was just seeing her, I'm not sure if I would have known it was her. The hair was the right length and her eyes are blue. Her skin is darker than

I imagined it and her ears don't stick out as much. I like her smile, she has more teeth. And she's not a little girl anymore, you'd think I would have noticed when I hugged her. But there is no doubt she is my daughter, the voice, the scent, the feel of her cheek, and so many other little details.

I could look at her forever, but as with all things, I don't have forever. We talked for a while. She spun for me so I could see how her dress warps around her when she stops. I wanted to go walking in the flower garden, but the nurse said I'd have to wait till tomorrow and my daughter said she had to run off to classes.

I sat there in my room, looking at the picture that is hanging on the wall. It keeps getting clearer – which is cool – then the little red light started flashing in the corner of my vision, letting me know that I had five minutes of charge left. I guess that's so I can pull over and stop if I'm driving.

Having to recharge my eyes every two hours is sure a pain, but it does give me blocks of time to think and write.

Got to spend this evening seeing more friends. No one looks like I imagined them. I can't wait for tomorrow – I get to go home. I wonder what my cat looks like? Will his claws look as sharp as they are?

June 23

I woke up early this morning, I was so excited to be going home. I packed everything up, had a quick breakfast, took a shower – I don't remember falling water looking so amazing – then I put the charger back on. I want to have a full charge when I get home.

- - -

It was so hard to not turn on my eyes on the way home. I know the city has changed a lot since I was a kid – I can hear the change. Almost all the cars are electric now – whirring around. And they are almost all autonomous – no honking. When I was a kid all the buildings were getting taller and bigger and closer together, now there are either less buildings or they reflect sound less – Maybe more trees.

Five minutes from home. I can feel my heart rate going up. I can smell the fresh cut lawns. The children playing. I keep catching myself reaching for the on switch – telling myself to wait.

- - -

They painted it. I was standing outside the car, ready to turn on my eyes and I could smell it. While I was away my family painted my house. I pressed the switch and my vision was filled with color. I'm not sure how they got permission from the home owner's association, maybe they didn't and will have to repaint it, but for now I live in a big beautiful green house with dark green trim that match perfectly with the huge green trees in the front yard and the purple gutters and down spouts. Did I mention the red doormat and big beautiful blue sky behind it.

I thought that all the color had overloaded my brand new eyes, but then I noticed the tears running down my face and the arms reaching around me and hugging me.

- - -

I was ready for the batteries to run out shortly after lunch. The house, the tour inside, the family album – all those moments I hadn't seem before.

When the red light flashed, I excused myself and laid down in my own bed. I slept for four hours as my eyes

recharged. I woke refreshed – ready to see more of my world.

We had friends over for dinner. Everyone wanted to know what it was like to see again. I honestly told them it was more like seeing for the first time. Most of my life has been spent not seeing, this is all new, not again.

We talked and even sang a little. When my eyes gave out, I kept on chatting. I was a little self-conscious sitting there with the charger covering my eyes. No one said anything about it, but maybe that's because I always look funny. I took off the charger, no one said anything about that either.

Our friends left at nine and I was asleep by ten – the charger back in place. I swear I can feel it charging – like its pulling my eyes to the charger and vibrating. Maybe its not a feeling, maybe I can hear it humming. Well, small price to pay to be able to see.

June 24

I woke up at two in the morning. My eyes were charged so I got up. I didn't know what to do in the middle of the night so I watched a couple episodes of my favorite show, which I had missed while getting my eyes. I keep surprising myself. The way I picture people in my head is sure different from how people really look. I guess that shouldn't be such a big surprise, people don't sound the same when I read what they say in a book and then some actor says it on a recording.

I stayed up till just after four. I listened to the last five minutes of the show in blackness.

I slept until seven, got up and got ready for the day in darkness, then, at eight, we all met for breakfast. It was nice seeing my whole family smiling and talking.

After everyone left for school and work, I headed to my office. It wasn't till I sat down at my desk that I real-

ized I don't have a video monitor on my computer. I turned off my eyes and got to work.

June 25

I'm still surprising myself by the assumptions I made about what things looked like when I couldn't see. I never would have guessed that my black cat has five white patches, or that my own hair has so many white strands in it. And don't get me started on how my wardrobe doesn't exactly match.

June 30

I've gotten into a routine now – when I see and when I don't.

If I'm up before the sun, I watch the sunrise. I get ready for the day in the dark. I power up for a couple minutes to make sure what I've picked actually matches. If we're eating together the eyes are on, if I'm eating alone there's not much to see.

I start my work day scanning through my e-mails the old fashion way – braille. Then I start work. I find myself turning on my eyes for a few minutes at a time, then turning them off again as soon as I don't need to see.

I usually go for a walk in the afternoon, taking in the sights. Then its dark again until evening. I'm always sure to have a full charge at dinner time and for the hour after that. Sometimes I save that extra hour for later in the evening and actually get two because I've recharged, other nights I stop charging early and get an hour right before bed time.

The strangest thing is how my new eyes have changed my nights. I'm waking up at two in the morning so I can use my charge and still be fully charged when I wake up. I don't set an alarm or anything, I just wake up.

I don't do anything amazing in the middle of the night, but I can't let this gift go unused.

So there you have it, what I hope is the view of a future that still has problems, but is better because of the technology we may come up with. What do you think? Is the future bright? Until next month, I hope your tomorrow are better than you yesterday, but that you don't forget to live today. Doug

Sign-up at <http://www.douglasclarke.com/lists/?p=subscribe> to make sure you get next months newsletter.