

First Times the Charm

As humans we are infatuated with “firsts”. To break through the barrier of beginning and to claim you have achieved something for the first time. First steps. First words. First day of school. First friend. First fight. First car. First kiss. First love.

The infatuation of me finding love began and ended in middle school. At the lunch table we went in a circle guessing who would get a boyfriend first, get married first, have children first. In the midst of discussion one of girls pronounced,

“Honestly Anna, I can't really see you ever getting a boyfriend.”

Great. I was 13, pimply and unloveable.

Moving through the world as the girl who was always pronounced “least likely to find love” made me deeply more aware of the “love” playing out around me. In the halls of my middle school I observed the awkward hugs and wet kisses of my fellow classmates. When the couple I always saw making out in front of the science pod soon disappeared halfway through the year to be found separated with their own group of friends I understood the trivial factors of love. My ticking romantic doom kept me wrapped up in other people's love stories. Even if the “love” was just mere hand holding and awkward renditions of “I love you”. I took in all I could for the sake of loves imposing pull.

Beginning high school insinuated the start of getting my shit together. The countless high school romance flicks I'd watched were catching up to me. In high school, relationships felt like a rite of passage, an essential blip in the timeline of growing up. It was the start of freshman year I became aware that my body could be deemed as something sexual in the eyes of other people - boys.

The first time I saw the boy that I would now consider my first love was in my freshman year algebra class. I remember thinking he looked cute and also very high. At this time, I saw people who smoked weed as “troubled” and “struggling” so the beginning stages of this crush came out of pity and the idea that I could “save him, fix him”. It's ironic and almost sweet now to think

back and realize that almost exactly a year from that first impression I would be sneaking out with him to smoke for the first time.

As the school year progressed I watched from a distance as he didn't notice me. I fell into the romantic notion of going unnoticed. The bombardment of "he doesn't deserve you!" whenever his name was brought up.

Part of the romance of romance is the fight of it all. The noticing every little thing they do to the most minute of spectacle and gaining nothing in return. That's a crush I assume.

To have a crush is to despise it, at least a little bit. Every bit of me couldn't help but see the 15-year-old stoner through rose colored glasses. Technically, to have a crush is to have, "a nervous response due to the sympathetic nervous system wired in the brain, activating your fight or flight response."

To love is to fight?

The world's infatuation with love can only help but to also be infatuated with heartbreak. From the first love we have to the last love we lose, it all wires itself together on the string of heartbreak and - repeat.

My first personal encounter with love ultimately started and ended in a sequence of one.

One look. One hangout. One question. One year. One more year. One fight. One end.

The first love brings along the implications of learning through living. I understand its pull and what is found within its grasp but can't seem to understand the thought of never letting go.

Many say your first love influences every other relationship you will ever be in. To personally negate this idea would be insincere. As a society we are influenced by the idea of the "one true love" the "one that *never* goes away". It's the *Romeo and Juliet* of it all. The Shakespearean fantasy of meeting "the one" but only with a fight. With a conflict that sets you both in place to

carry out the rest of your lives until you inevitably die embracing one another on a trail to eternal bliss.

The infatuation with “the lover” requires you to try at least once, with another. That first love overcame me, but on the other side, it was still me.

I found an article that tells you everything you should know about having a first love. It states, “Multiple studies have confirmed our brains experience something very much like addiction when we’re in love.” I can attest to this - but also recognize the blatant and obvious nature of this “fact”.

Love (noun and verb) - “an intense feeling of deep affection” “a great interest and pleasure in something” “feel deep affection for (someone)” “like or enjoy very much”

I was 17 years old when I truly realized I was in love with this boy. I was about halfway through my junior year of high school and had just begun researching colleges I may be interested in applying to, all of which were out of state.

The “high school sweetheart” phenomenon is something I have always detested. Nine times out of ten, my family’s dinner table conversations would just turn into lectures of life advice from my mother and father. The three pieces of advice I remember most clearly were:

1. Don’t do mushrooms (dad had a bad experience)
2. Don’t take pills (mom had a bad experience)
3. Don’t marry your highschool sweetheart

I knew I could not live with myself if I stayed in St. Paul, where his boy would be. We had a discussion about going long distance but it was quickly shut down by the advice of my parents.

Then, the breakup prevailed. To say it was the hardest thing I’ve been through is a privilege gone noticed.

One last visit. One last word. One last hug. One last door shut.

Love (noun and verb) - “an intense feeling of deep affection” “a great interest and pleasure in **something**”

I had **something** and it was now gone.

That’s why *first* must be called *first* I presume. To give validity to what's to come.

One after another until finally

You find the

One.