

I wanted to remember everything perfectly at this one moment. Our local homeless guy was sleeping in this morning on someone's discarded teal mattress right outside of the security gate. The Santa Ana's had rained pine needles across the courtyard. My air conditioner was releasing its moisture in syncopated droplets.

She was just inside probably on her second cup of coffee by now, knitting and taking her daily dose of her oh, so dreamy Matt Lauer. In distance she was just on the other side of the wall, not even six feet away.

Earlier in the week, the guy who wrote "100 Things to Do Before You Die" died. I hadn't read the book but I am pretty sure Number 100 wasn't slip on the rug and knock your head on the coffee table. That haunted me and I spent numerous hours thinking about this guy, without even thinking about reading his book.

I was smoking first thing in the morning outside. I enjoy these quiet moments alone. Just five minutes to my thoughts, several times a day. Today I was thinking big thoughts and she didn't know it but every stimulated grey cell was about to change her life too.

I always thought that when I would decide to propose, it would be out goofiness. Some over excitable nervous spontaneous energy spewing flowery poetry, perhaps with the guitar I never learned how to play. Then an immediate gunshot drive to Vegas fueled by overwhelming passion. The two of us flying together hand in hand soaring in the desert wind. It didn't feel that way. I had been thinking about it a little, but not a lot. It felt adult, well thought out. It felt solid and tangible, it felt easy. Done and Done. It just popped in my head. I hadn't agonized for weeks weighing the pros and cons. It was simple, I want to marry this girl.

I stubbed out my cigarette, disguised my smile and walked back inside. She was twittering with a botched knit or pearl, and told me to be quiet until she figured it out. Her fingers bundled up against the needle backwards and forth. Lauer was prattling from the TV set and I notice the French press was nearly empty, almost all grounds. She smiled triumphantly as she figured it out. I could speak again.

## **Year of the Groom**

Written by Dave Howard

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Can I get you some more coffee?