

As far as I can feel the Eiffel Tower.

I grew up in Paris, a town different from the one described in tourist guides, for these books are full of dates, French Kings and Presidents and famous citizens, full of revolutions and republics, full of History... My town was rather full of stories.

As for each person who once crossed her glance, the Eiffel Tower, our dear storyteller, memorized my story carefully. From the top of her height, she sees, watches everything.

Year after year, the mysterious Paris of my childhood became more than just a magic kingdom regulated by its own geographical rules. The town became the foundation where I built my soul step by step. A witness. Paris witnessed me laughing while I played with my schoolmates, then chatting about our first flirts, cruising in the maze of its streets. To gaze ecstatically at green trees and bright flowers of the Bois de Boulogne after my first kiss, to dance all night long in clubs of the Champs Elysees when I was sixteen, to murmur unrealistic future plans with someone else, to argue with my best friend about a legal matter at a terrace near the Sorbonne, to cry on a bench of the metro after a rupture under the pity glances of hurried Parisians, were the next stages.

I have never felt insecure in the town when I recklessly experienced new aspects of my life. As life carried the necessary experiences, Paris safely surrounded me. It did when I shared the fears of my childhood friend about her father's illness, when I reconciled with an ex during a walk in Luxembourg Park, when I proudly stepped down the stairs of the Palais de Justice after my oath ceremony as a lawyer, when I was cheered up by a friend, both spread side by side on the Montmartre's steps, looking at Paris and at the shining Eiffel Tower standing in front of us as in a postcard...

The Eiffel Tower... she is so elegant, so light in spite of her colossal mass of metal. Built for the instant, she has reduced the time which seems inefficient on her, to silence. The old lady wears her dark gold dress without a wrinkle. She is a goddess admired by daily prayers. Proudly, at night, she offers to everyone the spectacle of herself twinkling with a thousand flashes. Nothing might be able to shake her. She is a lighthouse, lighting the night with her puissant glare, calling after lost humans and spirits... and seagulls which were attracted once and which have never flown far away since that day.

I close my eyes and she appears as she appeared this warm night of June, my last night in Paris before I left for California. The air was full of the early summer smells: sun, water, asphalt, and trees mixed their touches in a unique fragrance, soft on the skin. Air also carried the thump sound of the nocturne circulation, the rustle of the foliage of the trees which are along the Seine embankments, and the

abrupt shout of a feminine laugh a little far away. Midnight was around the corner, and at this moment, she was quietly wearing her usual golden tails. Suddenly, at midnight, the dark deep sky lighted by her orange light was set fire by the bright crackling of her restored gown! I remember that tears slowly filled my eyes, and the vision was diluted in water... but for the ten minutes of her show, I stayed there looking at her. For several months, her evening dress had been off, and only her soft golden shimmering had lighted the Parisian nights. I was so happy that finally she recovered all her charms. I considered it as a good sign.

If you have ever been in Paris, you certainly have noticed this inexplicable fact. The best way to see the Eiffel Tower, to realize how majestic she is, how useful when you are lost, is to be far from her ... That is true. When you stand near her, she is so present that you do not notice her. But when you are far, you just have to glance at the skyline and you can not help seeing her, feeling her strength and her invulnerability. Then, you continue your way, overwhelmed by the fact that she will always be there to guide you, no matter how far you stand.

For a long time, I stood up near my family and my friends, I grew up under their comprehensive, loving glances, surrounded by the precious feeling of their unconditional and indefectible love; I was so used to their presences that I even didn't realize it, but now, I am far...

Had I fully understood that my family and my friends were my personal Eiffel Tower, I would have thanked them for my luck a long time ago. However, now, I am serene, happy and confident as far as I can feel my Eiffel Tower.