

The beginning of a new life is like the first day of Spring. The flowers bloom and the petals feel the heat of the sun for the first time. The leaves of the trees burst with a bold green color. You feel refreshed, you feel new. When a new member of the family is born, you see those powerful colors in the baby's eyes, you feel the heat of the sun from their small soft cuddles. It is a new beginning for them, as much as it is for you.

The night before Isla was born was such a complex day. Stuck at a volleyball tournament while your family is in Kalamazoo with your sister in the hospital is draining. Each play felt like it was moving in slow motion. Asking numerous times to leave and being told "No." by my cold hearted coach was tiring; my parent's should've just pulled me from the games so I could experience this with my family. For an unknown reason, all I felt was stress. It could've been that my team was taking last place in the tournament -- or it could have been that my life was about to change.

*Forever.*

After the tournament, the colors of the day looked different. Clouds covered the sky, but they weren't grey. They were pale blue. The sun was pink, the trees were teal. The entire drive to Kalamazoo my mind was everywhere, I was feeling things that I couldn't describe. I should be bouncing off the walls and smiling so bright that you can see me from miles away.

*But I wasn't.*

I was nervous. I kept repeating the same questions in my head.

“Will she like me?”

“What will she look like?”

“I wonder what her name will be?”

When I got there my sister was watching mean girls and bouncing on a ball while her husband bounced right by her side. Obviously confused, I thought I was supposed to have a niece. But apparently, it can take a long time for a new human being to be brought into the world.

I spent the night at the hospital. I slept on a cold, hard footstool in the lobby. When I say “*slept*,” I mean sleeping with one eye open -- sleeping with my elbow somehow touching my lower back. I always woke up to the sound of the elevator. It was so quiet, but so *loud*. I woke up about seven in the morning craving a chocolate muffin. I ate about five of those dark brown, ugly delicious things for dinner the night before. On my way down to the cafeteria, I thought the nudging in my front pocket was my hip popping from my body being twisted in a non human like way. But again, I was wrong. It was my phone vibrating.

*“The baby is coming!”*

I no longer wanted that chocolate muffin. I was so apprehensive I lost my appetite. I looked at my phone, looked down at the pale floor, took a deep breath then headed back upstairs to the ninth floor. I was ready to meet her.

*I was ready for this change.*

Isla August Northouse. Those names blend so well together. When I held her for the first time, she looked bold. Her rose pink cheeks were so warm I had to squeeze them like a grandma. Her hair was like a field of golden tulips -- blonde and soft to the touch. She didn't know me, but she wrapped her soft small hand around my cold long finger. I didn't know her,

*But I already loved her.*