



I often wonder about the stranger who kissed her on that sunny June day. My friend and I were out for our daily walk. I pushed the stroller along the sidewalk while we decided which restaurant to venture into for a coffee and a snack. We walked into a greasy spoon on Yonge Street. I suppose the impoverished and frail man watched us find a table and park the stroller next to me. The man had a small frame, he was unshaven, and his clothing was

ragged. We ordered our coffee. The man walked toward us quickly and unsteadily. He looked into the stroller where my two-month-old daughter was sleeping.

He said, "Nice baby."

He stood and abruptly walked away as I smiled and said, "Thank you."

The man sat down at his table again, holding his hands around his coffee mug. What seemed like only moments later, the man again appeared beside the stroller. He peered in to see my daughter snuggled up warm in her blanket.

He looked down at her and said, "Nice baby."

The gentle man looked at me and, with a tear in his eye, he spoke plainly, "Nice baby."

"Yes, thank you." That was all I could think of to say to this troubled man.

My friend and I looked at one another. Words were not needed to express our sympathy or perhaps pity for this lonely and unkempt old man. He sat down again. I caught a glimpse of him holding his mug. His dry hands held it tightly, and they shook slightly as he gulped the last of his coffee.

He stood quickly and walked directly towards us. My eyes followed him closely. He bent down, reached into the stroller, and gently kissed my daughter's cheek. I held the stroller protectively.

He stood. "Nice baby," he said again and walked quickly toward the door. I turned to watch the man leave the restaurant. I peeked at my daughter. She was still sound asleep and oblivious to the kind yet peculiar gesture from the stranger. My friend and I

sat in silence. It was an odd feeling. I suppose I surprised myself. I didn't react in anger or disgust, but rather with a new sense of compassion for a lonely, old man with an untold story.

I often wonder about the stranger who kissed my daughter on that sunny June day. Did he once have a family that was now gone? Did he have a baby girl somewhere out there that he had lost?

I am thankful to the gentle, lonely, and dishevelled old man who taught me that everyone has the capacity to express love to another human being.