



Dear sirs, dear madams, dear me:

I'm writing in the hope of explaining who I am.

I'm the little girl who was born on Mardi Gras Day. My best friend's name is Mafalda.

I'm the teenage girl with her hair parted right down the middle. To take my mind off things I spend time with Cosimo and his dachshund in that book about the young baron who went to live up in the trees.

I'm the woman who for a year now has lived on her own, working for the world's tiniest newspapers and teaching foreign children something they can keep forever: communication in Italian.

Also, I'm going blind. That's the cold, hard truth. With my brown, rather ordinary eyes I see only a fifth of what other people can see.

But this is where things get good.

Ever since I learned that one day in the not-so-distant future I will lose my sight completely, my every morning contains a brand new light. Don't get me wrong—I'm not a wise, heroic, tragic person; I'd much rather be able to see well. But given that I can't, I've decided to let go of the doubts and fears that have constrained me for too long. Now, I throw myself head-first into life, with twice as much zeal.

I ski (following my friends).

I play the piano (by ear).

I travel, although sooner or later some crazy taxi driver is going to take me to his secret underground lair instead of to the address I give him, but he will remember me like I am now: going blind, but happy.

At night I sit by my window and stare at the star-filled sky. If I had a daughter and she asked me about the very last thing I saw before losing my sight completely, I would want to say it is the stars.

Fortunately they invented the Kindle so I'm reading at full speed again. Literature is my biggest passion. I continue to read one book after the other, one adventure after the other.

I want to write. I can't wait any longer. I have eyes inside my hands, and when I'm writing I see even better inside my head. Before my light goes out I want to light a fire in this world, a fire people can use to warm themselves on this hellish crazy-go-round of life.

I love you. I've always loved you. I'll always love you.

That's how I would say goodbye.

I'm a writer. I've always been a writer. I'll always be a writer.

That's how me and I say goodnight before we close our eyes.

Thank you for listening to my story. I hope to see you soon . . .  
and that's not just a manner of speaking.

Paola



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