

- ▢ [Home](#)
- ▢ [Reading notes](#)
- ▢ [Good Poems](#)
- ▢ [Media Diary](#)
- ▢ [Photos](#)
- ▢ [Live Blogs](#)
- ▢ [Links](#)

Love What Lasts

122 - "All beauty places a burden on those who bear witness to it. The burden is an obligation to declare that it has been seen. If two people stand before a Rembrandt painting long enough, one will have to say, "This is beautiful," to the other. Likewise, if a husband and wife dine in a restaurant wherein their waitress is very beautiful, both man and woman feel awkward until one acknowledges the fact. Neither feels as though they can be honest with the other and get on with the business of the meal until one person admits, "The waitress is very beautiful." Making this declaration alleviates the obligation: a man is relieved to admit that great beauty has come near, since confessing its presence recalibrates reality after it has been thrown askew. Silence in the presence of beauty is simply intimidation.

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