

To Mom With Love

A Mother's Anthology



To Mom, with Love

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Edited by: Claude R. Royston

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BK Royston Publishing
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Dedication

*This book is dedicated to
Every Mother in the World*

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who contributed to this book to
make it a success.

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Grace Foree
Sharon C. B. Hunter
Judith Kinnard
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Estelle Nelson
Nycea Patterson
Tara Tharpe
Lucy Monin Webb
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To every mother, keep doing what you do to care for, protect and encourage your family. No matter if they don't understand now, they will later and cry when they remember all of the lost moments in your presence.

Thank you.

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KATHERINE BOYD

Indiana

MOMMA

In HONOR OF BARBARA JEAN HAYDEN FOREE

Momma must have been an angel, she cared
so strongly,

She loved her children so deeply, that it
must be true.

Maybe that's why God called her back to
heaven so soon.

She left her love here just to pull us
through.

Wish you could see the strong independent
women we have become,

The lessons you taught us stay with us still;

As your hopes and dreams for us we strive
to fulfill

Because you said, "if you invite one, you
invite them all."

And you taught the older ones to watch out
for the younger ones,

We, your four girls are bonded for life.

Yes, sometimes there are challenges,
misunderstandings and strife,

But we've got each other's back, it keeps us
on the right track!

So, if you mess with one, you'll deal with us
all;

When my sister is in trouble she knows who
to call.

Because you said, "finish your homework,
then you can play."

"Say yes ma'am, no ma'am, thank you and
please,"

Momma, all of your girls earned their
degrees

You had every confidence that we would
succeed,

You led by example each and every day,
from nightly dinners at the table and as
president of the PTA,

You were an awesome woman who still had
enough love to give away!

A heart has four chambers and you filled
each of yours with love

A chamber for each of us girls as you
wrapped your whole heart around your
only son,

Who now rests with you in heaven above.

We had pretty dresses and pressed hair,
long summer days without a care.

Birthday parties and pound cake, library
cards and the rolls only you could bake!

Sunday dinners, lots of laughs and play
dates and trips to the park

No, we couldn't play outside after dark
Couldn't call the boys, or wear our skirts too
high

Had to tell you where we were going, with
whom and why.

Up early for Sunday school and when adults
were talking, we didn't speak

You taught us to put the Lord first.

Momma, what you did works.

We are strong, independent women who
know our worth.

Thank you, Momma for your sacrifices, your
unwavering, unfailing love

Soar on with the Angels in heaven above

We know you loved us so much, but we
love you more.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.



SYLVIA CARLTON

Illinois

THE BAKE SALE

Belinda hurried to finish up a few last-minute documents at work. It was Mother's Day weekend and, as always, she was participating in the church bake sale the day before Mother's Day. She needed to stop by the market after work and pick up a few more items for her cupcakes. Each year she planned to make some extravagant dessert to "wow" everyone, but ultimately ended up making cupcakes. But since everyone always looked forward to them, why mess up a good thing? As she shut down her computer, Belinda remembered a phone call she had received from her mother earlier in the week and felt a lump in her throat. Her mother always came to visit for Mother's Day and helped her bake the cupcakes. But this year, due to financial difficulties, she was unable to make the trip. She lived on the East Coast just outside of Boston and would travel by train to where Belinda and her husband, Jeff, lived in Atlanta. She was afraid of planes, and Belinda had long since given up trying to convince her that it was

just as safe to travel by air as it was by rail. She wished that her mother had let her know sooner that she wouldn't be able to come and she could have talked to her husband Jeff about them purchasing a train ticket for her. But by the time her mother let her know, only days ago, it was too late. That was typical of her mother, never wanting to worry her or ask for anything.

Belinda sighed heavily as she tried to push the thought of her mother to the back of her mind. She had too much to do, and a very short time to do it. She made it to the market just before closing, and drove home to begin the task of baking 100 cupcakes. Each year, the number of cupcakes needed seemed to grow. She smiled as she thought of how she enjoyed her mom helping her in the kitchen; and how it always felt as if she were a little girl again as they baked cupcakes.

Jeff heard her pull into the driveway and came out to help bring in the bags. "Good grief," he gasped, "how many cupcakes are

you baking?” “You know how the demand grows each year,” she laughed. “Well, it’s you and me this year kiddo,” Jeff tried to sound humorous. Belinda managed to force a smile, but still couldn’t get past the idea that her mother wasn’t going to be here this year. “Thanks, dear. I’m sure we will manage,” she tried to sound convincing. “Let’s get to work.”

At ten-thirty that evening, they had taken the last batch of cupcakes out of the oven. The house smelled heavenly. Now they had to let them cool overnight and put the frosting on the next morning before packing them up and taking them to the church. The bake sale was to begin at 11:00 a.m. and last until 3:00 p.m. Afterwards, all of the women usually stayed to help clean up and then have coffee and chat about how the sale went and basically just “girl talk.” It was always a fun time, and Belinda enjoyed their company. But this year, she dreaded having to explain why her mother wasn’t there. She told Jeff she was probably not going to stick around after the sale. “I don’t think that would be a good idea,” Jeff told her. “I

think you would feel better if you stayed and had coffee with your friends. They will understand about your mom, and it will help you feel better about her not being here.” “I don’t know,” Belinda shrugged. “We’ll see.” A half-smile crossed Jeff’s face, and Belinda thought to herself why he would see any humor in this situation. But she was too tired to worry about it, and besides, it was probably just her imagination. She went upstairs to take a warm bath and try to get some sleep.

The next morning, Belinda and Jeff packed up what seemed to be a million cupcakes and headed for the church. After they set up their table, Jeff told Belinda he had to run out to the store to pick up some extra table cloths. “I shouldn’t be long; are you going to be okay here?” “Sure” Belinda smiled. I will be fine.” She thought it a bit strange that Jeff had to go pick up table cloths. They always seemed to have an ample supply at the church and had never run short. And then there was that strange half-smile on his face again. Belinda chalked it up to her imagination and realized that her

mother not being there was taking more of a toll on her than she thought.

The sale went off without a hitch.

Everyone's desserts were just perfect, as always. There were enough cakes, pies, cookies and cupcakes to stock a bakery. As the afternoon was coming to a close, Belinda caught sight of a cake sitting on the end of her table that she had not seen there before.

It was a pineapple upside down cake, and now she had to fight back tears, because that was her mother's specialty. She had made it almost to the end of the afternoon, but now she felt as if she was going to lose it. She looked around for Jeff. She spotted him a few tables away and motioned for him to come over.

"Jeff," Belinda looked confused, "do you know who put that cake on our table? It wasn't there earlier."

"You mean the pineapple upside down cake?" Jeff frowned.

"Yes, that one. And Jeff, it looks so much like mom's. I can hardly stand to see it sitting there."

“Let me find out,” said Jeff. I think I saw someone put it there and then head towards the kitchen. I’ll go see if she is still there.”

“Okay, thanks,” Belinda slowly sat down as she tried not to look at the cake. It was too much of a reminder of her mother.

Belinda closed her eyes and tried to relax. Right now, she just wanted to go home. It had been a long afternoon for her, and she wanted desperately to call her mom. All of sudden, she saw Jeff emerge from the kitchen leading someone beside him. She blinked her eyes and thought to herself, “Ok Belinda, now you’ve really lost it.” But as they got closer, she realized that it was her mom with Jeff. But how? When? Tears of joy rolled down her face as she flew from her chair and embraced her mother.

“Mom!” “When did you get here?” “How did you get here?” She looked over at Jeff, who was beaming and smiling. Then she remembered those half-smiles she had seen him flash, the night before and again when he said he had to run to the store. Now she

realized he had not gone to get table cloths; he had left to pick up her mother.

“I was hoping you didn’t realize how long it took me to go and buy table cloths,” Jeff laughed.

“The airport is a little bit farther away than the store.” Belinda couldn’t believe her ears. “Mom, you *flew* here?”

Her mother smiled, “Yes dear.

When Jeff found out I didn’t have the money for a train ticket, it was too late for a reservation, so he purchased a plane ticket with the help of your sisters from the church and they said I would just have to pray and get on that plane. It actually wasn’t that bad. I was a little closer to heaven! And how could I ever miss spending Mother’s Day with my only daughter, or much less miss the bake sale! So I decided to make my famous pineapple upside down cake and bring along it with me. Now come on, let’s cut this cake and have some coffee!”

**GRACE
FOREE**

Kentucky

Jesus loves the little children, *all* the children of the world. He is the only one. Santa Claus has an agenda; he only takes care of the good ones. Santa has spreadsheet lists and lumps of coal. The Easter Bunny has that odd predilection for eggs. The Tooth fairy is only in it for the teeth and, frankly, that creeps me out. The only one that comes close to loving like that is a Mother; and to be honest she only truly, madly, deeply loves her own. The rest are just a necessary evil.

A mother loves her child no matter how unlovable he may be to everyone else. Mothers love the fat ones, the skinny ones, the mean ones, the shy ones, the ones with runny noses and dirty faces, the bullies and the crybabies. They even love the difficult ones. To them, that's their precious, darling son or daughter. A mother loves that child you hear screaming in the grocery store. A mother loves that child you wish would be put out of the nice restaurant. Some mother adores that child you would like to

sedate in the movie theater. To her they are just tired, or hungry or scared. Dare I say it? Yes, I will, they even love that one that you think, “I really don’t believe in spanking, but that kid over there throwing the tantrum, I would fight myself, WWF style. Yet, somehow that child’s mother loves him. She may not like him, but, she loves him. God bless the mother of the difficult child.

I have tremendous admiration for mothers and the way they love and support their children. I have a special place in my heart for the love a mother has for a difficult child. It is probably upsetting to most mothers to think of someone labeling their child as difficult. Perhaps you prefer terms like, challenging, special, creative, strong-willed or even genius. Maybe the honest truth is, all children can be difficult at one time or another. In a world full of labels, many mothers may be facing the challenge of raising a child that doesn’t meet with their expectations of motherhood or

parenting. ADHD, Autistic, Dyslexic, Bipolar, these are just a few of the labels prevalent in today's culture that present unique challenges in loving and raising a child. Somehow mothers find a way to do it and do it well.

In the interest of full disclosure, I am sure I was a difficult child. I am told that my mother was seriously ill after my birth; she was kept in the hospital for some time after my birth. I was her fourth daughter, showing up when I am sure they hoped for a son. I was an extremely finicky eater who would refuse to eat if I wasn't served what I liked, which, during one odd phase was butter and jelly sandwiches! I was prone to cavities and ear infections. My hair wouldn't grow and I danced all the time. I thought I was smart so I made sure to ask lots of interesting questions and offered up my various and frequent opinions. Yet, my mother loved me and there was never a doubt in my mind.

I have a particularly vivid memory of being in second grade and studying the color palette in art class. We learned how to mix the primary colors to create other colors on the spectrum. I enjoyed explaining how blue and yellow blended to green, red and yellow created orange and that pink was from the combination of red and white. I found this totally fascinating. I am sure my mother had many other cares and concerns, but she always listened patiently.

Well, as a result of my art class, I decided that pink and red were matching colors. I had a pale pink cotton dress with black ribbons and white lace trimmings. The “artist” in me was convinced that I could wear this dress with vivid, red knit socks. Now, my mother took great care regarding the appearance of her children, hair just so, clothes pressed and matching, so my initial proposal of wearing the red knee socks with the pink dress was met with a firm, “no,” and a request to put on white socks or white tights. I complied, but, thus began

my attempts to prove that pink and red did indeed match. I explained they were in the same color family, in my head, pink was like the child of red and white. How could they not match? Over the coming weeks I discussed it incessantly. I mixed ketchup and mayonnaise to prove my point; I scribbled designs with red and white crayons. I was a child with a mission. I don't know if my relentless assault wore her down or if I actually converted her, but one Wednesday evening I was allowed to wear the pink dress and red socks to Bible study! It was a proud moment. I was convinced that I was stylish and color coordinated. I proudly shared with a few friends and family members how I had convinced my mother how well matched was pink and red. My friends were impressed and the adults smiled indulgently.

I sometimes wonder nostalgically about that annoying little girl and how difficult she must have been to love. Yet, I never felt anything other than loved and valued by my

mother. The security of this love has helped me handle life's challenges and disappointments. I have never doubted my value or my worth. I credit this to the unconditional love a mother has for her child, even a difficult one. Thus, I admire a mother's love; especially the love mothers have for that child that the rest of the world may find unlovable.

I think this unwavering gift of love belonging solely to mothers must come from God. It's been there since the beginning of time. Mary loved and reared Jesus who had to be a bit of a know it all. Jochebed could love Moses even as he was in foster care. Noah's mother could love him when all he could talk about was rain and arks. Bathsheba could love Solomon enough to ask King David to give him the kingdom although he was a bit of a wise guy and a womanizer. The mother of James and John had a love so bold, she asked God face to face to give them powerful positions in Heaven. Elizabeth loved John the Baptist

who roamed the wilderness eating wild honey and locusts. I could go on, but I won't. Suffice to say, a mother loves her children with an amazing love, even the difficult ones. I know my mother, Barbara Hayden Foree loved me and whether she found it difficult or not, she made it look easy.

**SHARON C. B.
HUNTER**

Kentucky

I Was Not Cheated

Have you ever had the feeling a something was about to happen dramatic and you wanted to run from it? You felt in your bones a change was coming and somehow, you knew you weren't going to like it. When 2007 ended and 2008 approached I felt something really bad was about to happen. The latter part of 2007 I began to feel like I wanted to dig my heels in the dirt and stay still. However, 2008 continued to drag me in like a tantrumming child kicking, screaming, and fighting the trip. The funny thing is nothing happened overly dramatic. As 2008 need and 2009 began, I felt those same emotions begin to try to take over. And I heard the voice of the Lord speak to my spirit, "Nothing will happen that you and I cannot handle" I felt the sense of truth and relief calm my life. So I lived.

Everything was going well, until April of 2009. The major holiday my Mother and I shared was Resurrection Sunday over at my

sister's house. I look back on those pictures and smile because it was the last time my Mother was up moving about the way she wanted. By June of 2009, my Mother fell ill with a somewhat common issue that developed into a life/game changer. My Mother was an expressive being to put it sweetly. If she did not like it, she would let you know. If it did not taste right, she would let you know. If you smelled, looked, or talked funny, again no boundaries, she would let you know. She did it in love, never to hurt you. Her intention was always to help. However, her expressive and sometimes explosive personality led her down to stress city a time or two!

I remember the call I received at work the day she was admitted to the hospital. My dad called me and said, "Hey meet me at the hospital, your mother is not doing good." To be all the way honest, I had been down this road with my Mother before. So there was a part of me that got up with an attitude, 'business as usual' But, it was not

the usual, as a matter of fact, things were about to change and never be the same.

After one year of hospital visits to the intensive care unit, nursing home visits, home visits, three major church family friends dying, a childhood icon, Michael Jackson dying, and a childhood neighbor dying, then my Mother died. I believe that is what I felt coming at the beginning of 2008, the beginning of the end of my Mother's life.

One of the things that people say to make you feel better is time heals all wounds. I suppose there is some truth to this old adage. However, what I found was God and time gave me opportunity to get over my mountain of hurt and emotion. And another confession almost 3 years later is God helped me to see I was not cheated.

Let me explain. After the passing of my mother, I was angry at the doctors for messing up. And I am who I am so I say messing but I have another six letter word I would like to use but I will keep it Holy. I

was mad at my sisters for different reasons that in the end did not matter. I was mad at myself, because I felt useless, helpless, and hurt. I would look around at other people who had their Mothers and questioned God, “Why did my Mother have to go?” I have learned on my life journey, God is patient. He allowed me to wrestle with my questions until He decided to speak.

Another thing I love about God is when He speaks because what He says IS so profound, He gives us time to process the words, comments, and the discovery, some call Revelation! The first discovery God gave me was while I was headed home I passed my youngest daughters elementary school and chuckled as I remembered all the days my Mother would pick her up from my house and take her to school because she had missed the bus. Mother loved to do it, but my youngest daughter loved the pick-ups more. She figured out that Maw Maw, which is what all her grandchildren affectionately called her, would buy

breakfast. Needless to say, when she figured this out, she missed the bus a lot more. Anyway, as the funny thought made me laugh, I felt the Spirit of God nudge me to Bless Him for the sweet and stop focusing on the bitter moments. In the 5 minutes it took me to drive across Cooper Chapel road, I was in full throttle praise because God showed up to encourage me that even though Mother was gone I still had memories. Sweet Memories. Some people don't have even this. In my mother's 61 years of living, it was this last year that was the bitter. All the rest was sweet!

I mulled it over and over and I know it was God because it was the truth, "In all things, give thanks!" I had failed to Give God the praise for the time we had together and only was focusing on the time I felt we lost.

The next discovery came recently while looking at Christian TV one Sunday morning. A young news woman was doing an interview and she began to talk about her

deceased father. She said a lot of stuff, but the thing I heard that I knew was from God for me was her comment, 'I was not cheated'

Even though she went into all her own discussion with the interviewer, I felt God moving in the comment, 'You were not cheated.'

I understood in an instant and began to praise God again because in my life without my mom, I was not cheated for everything she taught me, for introducing me to Christ, prayer, and holy living, etc. etc. etc. I was not cheated. She made sandwiches after school. I was not cheated. She bought ice cream from the ice cream truck. I was not cheated. She whooped our butts. I was not cheated. She laughed with me until our sides hurt. I was not cheated. She was there for my first marriage and all my children. I was not cheated. She was there for the divorce. I was not cheated. She supported me and my children while coping with single parenting. I was not cheated. The

sweet and complicated love she shared with my father. I was not cheated. I was not cheated. The love she expressed to others who usually cheated her. I was not cheated. Her supernatural gifting to give that blessed my life over and over and over again. I was not cheated.

I had the chance to live with her. I had the chance to love my Mother. I had the chance to assist my Mother. And though those few moments bitterness stung my life for a few years, God is so faithful to remind be to give thanks because He loved me enough to give me some beautiful moments to remember to cherish to pass on....So that they will not be cheated.

**JUDITH
KINNARD**

Kentucky

No More Crumbs

One Mother's Dream Realized...

It was July 2003 and Jewels fell on her knees that night as she did every night asking, seeking and praying for God to help her, save her, and rescue her from the darkness within herself. Jewels was in such a dark place in that season of her life, she was literally on the verge of a major nervous break-down. This darkness, this place of desperation and desolation was pulling her to a place of no return. Jewels' reality shook her deeply. She was shaken so deeply because she realized that if she were locked away in that bottomless pit of sadness and depression there would be no one to take care of her precious son, Christoff. Jewels knew that her being locked away in a psych ward would not help anyone involved. There was a driving force, however, that helped Jewels raise her head and say to herself "I will not give up."

Jewels was living on welfare and section eight. She was living a life of less than, filled with complacency, low self-worth, and a constant whirl wind that would not allow her to get her feet planted. As a result she had difficulty taking care of herself and Christoff. Every day Jewels would look at her surroundings and felt frustration and sadness inside. It was quite overwhelming. Everyday Jewels would pray and tell God... "I know you have created me to be greater than my eyes could see". The truth of the matter was simply this.....Jewels was not providing for her son as she should have. The depression was rising up in like a tsunami that at any moment was going to come and sweep Jewels and her Christoff completely off the face of the earth. In the back of Jewels' mind, in the midst of the anxieties, the mind less chatter in her head never ceased. Jewels gave way for only a quick second. Maybe she and Christoff would be better off if that tsunami had just come and swept them away.

Everyday Jewels still held on to the belief that God had more for her and that someday God would answer her prayers. Then she and Christoff could live a life of abundance and have no lack. At this point there was help from the welfare system. She received a \$225.00 check each month. However, by the second week of the month it was gone. It seemed as if it had dissipated into thin air. Jewels also received food stamps. Each time she needed them she could tear out the exact amount she spent, as if it were actual cash. Jewels was grateful and so blessed to have this source of help. But there was always the dread of knowing those stamps were not going to last to the end of the month and neither was that check of \$225.00. After all Christoff was nine years old and he was eating as if he would never fill his belly. Christoff was doing exactly what a boy his age should be doing. It seemed as though he was eating everything in sight and he

was growing like a weed. Since Jewels was on section eight that paid the majority of Jewels' rent, but she was left to take care of the remainder. Next there was the phone and electric bill that must be paid. In addition, Christoff was growing and it seemed as though the dryer was rapidly shrinking his clothes. Just as soon as Jewels would purchase Christoff clothes, one month later he was growing out of them. Jewels was in a vicious circle. The lights would get turned off and her phone was disconnected every month. Jewels had an amazing family; they were always there to lend a helping hand. But then she felt the pain of being a burden to even her family. After all it wasn't their responsibility to take care of her and Christoff.

Jewels would receive a child support check from Christoff's father once in a blue moon. She and Christoff's father, Philip Adkins, were very much in love at one time. They were even making wedding plans. Yet,

Philip changed his tune and began to show a side of himself that devastated Jewels. Therefore, their relationship came to an abrupt end 6 weeks after Christoff's birth. When the child support checks did come the amount was so small that Jewel had to laugh to keep from crying, but still she remained grateful. God knew the baby needed a new pair of shoes and the child support check did help Jewell to some extent. To make matters worse Christoff's father was very inconsistent in his life. He would tell Christoff that he would call or come and spend time with him and then would not show. Christoff, at an early age came to his own conclusion that his dad was not a man of his word. That caused a great resentment within Christoff's heart. Jewels felt the guilt rise in her as if someone's hands had wrapped around her neck and her life was being taken. Her guilt came from the fact that she had made a conscious choice to conceive Christoff with this man. Yes, they were in love and yes,

Christoff was conceived in love, but Jewels and Philip did things backward, they put the buggy before the horse. The truth in life is this: for every choice we make, there is a consequence, and these consequences were overwhelming. Still Jewels believed that God was going to answer her prayers. She just knew that she and Christoff both were destined for far greater blessings than life experiences in that moment were showing. Jewels knew in her heart and in her mind that there had to be a better way. Jewels' thoughts were always, "God I know you have a better life for me." There had to be a better way to provide for her son and herself, and something had to give.

This feeling of being trapped and the daily circumstances were drowning Jewels. She needed to hear an answer from God. Everyday Jewels would see the commercials of Disney World. And for whatever reason she would stop what she was doing. It was as if a magnet pulled her to the television

screen and she would just stare at the commercials and every day she would say "someday I am going to take Christoff to Disney World, Lord I don't know how I'm going to do it, but I'm going to get him there." On one given night Jewels fell on her knees as she did every night, but on that night Jewels cried out to God that she was tired of the way her life was going. She was exhausted from this life of complacency. She cried out to God in her sheer desperation. In her fear and depressed living she cried out to God to save her and Christoff. She reminded God that he had spoken to her many years prior and that he was calling her to greatness. She asked God to help her at this very moment.

Jewels recognized that she was not really living, she was simply existing. Jewels would convince herself this is not her real life, but it was coming. Jewels got off her knees and climbed into her bed. She slept very peacefully that night, since God had spoken to her heart that everything was

going to be alright.

The next day around 12 noon there was a knock at Jewels' door, she wasn't expecting anyone. She asked, "who is it?" The voice on the other side of the door was Hamilton. Jewels called him, "The "keeper of her dreams". Hamilton and Jewels had dated a few years prior. During the time they were together he wanted to know everything about Jewels. What made her tick? What were her dreams from the smallest to the biggest? He wanted to know what made her happy and sad. Hamilton asked the questions that would eventually lead him to Jewels' door many years later. In many of the conversations that she and Hamilton shared she had forgotten that she had shared with him her desire to one day sing and perform on a huge stage before thousands of people. Hamilton held onto Jewels' dream of blessing millions with her gift of singing. It was true Jewels had been blessed with the gift to sing, but her life and

her circumstances had caused her to forget about that dream. Jewels had taken that dream, placed it in a shoe box and she put that dream and that box in the very back of her closet. Jewels asked Hamilton, "What are you doing here"? Jewels already knew the answer to her question. Hamilton answered "We are going to make a video of you singing, Elton's John's hit, *The Circle of The Life*". Jewels thought, "Here we go again with this singing stuff, this man just won't quit." Thank God he didn't quit. The "keeper of her dreams", had been living in Orlando, Florida and performing in an amazing show. It was one of the best shows on that property as Hamilton explained it. It was located in one of the theme parks. Hamilton had spoken to Jewels about this show on several occasions. Every time he would come in town to visit his family, he would call Jewels. He would tell her there was a lead role in the show and she would fit it to perfection. The "keeper of my dreams" knew what was in Jewels. Jewels

had given in to a false reality that her voice was only for the church. She was very comfortable with that preconceived notion. So even though what Hamilton spoke may have been true, Jewels just would not allow herself to believe it.

Jewels had suffered so much disappointment and sadness she could have thought that this too might lead to disappointment. Hamilton was persistent about what could be accomplished. The “keeper of my dreams” would not give up on Jewels. The truth is he continued to pursue her for one year. He kept reminding her that singing is what she always wanted to do. He would ask Jewels, "Did you forget that you always wanted to sing?" He would constantly remind her that her voice was not just for the people in the church, nor was it just for the people in city of Louisville, Kentucky.

Hamilton would share with Jewels the love he had for the people he worked with and he spoke of how they had become his family. He would go into the detail about the show in which he performed. When he began to speak of the show his eyes would

light up, his eyes would get really wide, or should I say wider. Hamilton's eyes were already huge. Yet through his eyes and his words Jewels felt that she had nothing to lose. Hamilton, in an effort to encourage her to live out her dreams, expressed to her that every day as he and his new family performed on that stage he living out his dream. Sure what Hamilton spoke sounded amazing. In fact, it sounded too good to be true. Yet, Hamilton, The “keeper of her dreams” was relentless about Jewels’ dream coming to fruition. He held on to Jewels’ dream when she did not have the strength to hold on to it for herself. Hamilton persisted for one year until finally that day when he knocked on her door July 2003 Jewels cried "UNCLE". The “keeper of her dreams,” Hamilton, came that day ready for Jewels to prepare for her audition. He was determined to help her walk into her own destiny. Hamilton asked Jewels to sing "*The Circle Of Life*" right into that camera. In that moment Jewels was overwhelmed with joy and excitement. She had a new zeal, a new expectation and new hope that made her believe her dreams could become a reality. Hamilton would be returning to Orlando the next morning and

the plan was that he would give the video Jewels made to the director of the show. Hamilton had given the director all of Jewels' information hoping that she would hear from him.

The phone call never came from Disney. Jewels began to doubt and feel discouraged again. The "keeper of her dreams" would call Jewels every other day and ask the same question, "Have you received a phone call yet?" Jewels' response was always the same, "No, nothing." Two weeks had passed and the "keeper of her dreams" called Jewels to ask her to come to Orlando, Florida immediately. The goal, Hamilton said, was to audition once again. Jewels explained to Hamilton that she could not afford a trip to Florida. She simply did not have the money to travel that far. But God was working and his favor on her life was "busting out of the seams." Hamilton understood Jewels' situation all too well. The words that the "keeper of her dreams" spoke next sent Jewels into tears. Hamilton explained to her that the role was for her. He then told Jewels that he would send the money for her bus ticket. In addition, Hamilton told her he would pay the expenses of her room and board. Jewels

could not believe what she was hearing. The man to whom she had spoken her dreams many years ago was doing what he knew was the right thing to do on Jewels behalf. So the journey began. Jewels packed her bags for that week that she would be Orlando, Florida. Her Mom agreed to take care of Christoff until Jewels returned to Louisville. Jewels took her seat on that Greyhound bus and rode a total of 18 hours to reach the Sunshine State. There was an awakening that had risen within Jewels that made that 18 hour ride seem insignificant. Jewels was desperate for something greater. What did she have to lose? She rode on that bus content with a spirit of great expectation within her.

As that Greyhound bus came across the State line into Florida, Jewels saw palm trees everywhere. Something rose up in Jewels that words could not explain. Once she reached her destination arriving at the Orlando bus terminal, there he was waiting for her. Hamilton, the “keeper of her dreams”, found her luggage and the journey for Jewels dream coming true was set in motion. Hamilton worked relentlessly with Jewels all that week. He was preparing her

to walk into what God had ordained and into what Hamilton knew belonged to Jewels. The day of the audition came. It was getting late and Jewels was last to audition that day. Just before she walked into the audition room, the “keeper of her dreams” hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, and told her, "Show them how's it done." Jewels felt nervous, and butterflies were flying full speed in her belly. She handed the pianist her music and stood there in front of the piano. The man behind the table was kind he asked if she was ready. Jewels gave the pianist the queue to start playing and she opened her mouth to sing "*The Center of My Joy*" by the famous gospel artist Mr. Richard Smallwood. When she finished singing 16 bars of the song that Hamilton, The “keeper of her dreams”, had prepared for her to audition, Mr. Valentino, asked Jewels this simple question, "Where have you been all my life?" He then wanted Jewels to sing before a group of his peers. She was asked to perform the song from the show, "*The Circle of Life*." Immediately there was a buzz in the room. Jewels' thought was WOW!! Next, the big question came that almost floored Jewels. “Are you willing to relocate?” “Can you relocate

immediately?" Jewels gave a resounding "YES" to both questions. She let Mr. Valentino know that she had a nine year old son and asked if that would be a problem. Mr. Valentino assured Jewels that would be no problem. Mr. Valentino made sure that all of Jewels' information was correct and he assured her that she would be hearing from someone very soon.

When Jewels opened the door to walk out of the audition there he was, Hamilton, The "keeper of her dreams". Hamilton had been in the next room listening to everything. He looked at Jewels with tears running down his face. At that point Jewels could not hold back tears any longer herself. In the midst of all that, Jewels heard God speak in a still small voice. His words to her were, "I am calling you to bless nations with your voice, go home, get your son and pack your bags this position is yours." After all the excitement Hamilton, The "keeper of her dreams", encouraged her to get ready for a new journey and a new chapter in her life as well as Christoff's. Jewels felt as though she would never be able to thank Hamilton enough. He simply said, "No need for thanks." He just wanted her to walk in her

dream, and he had simply had done what God had spoken to him, on her behalf. On that bus ride back to Louisville, Jewels was elated about all that she had experienced. She could hardly wait to see Christoff's face and just hold him. She couldn't wait to get back to start packing her bags as God had instructed her to do. Now, Jewels ran into a lot of many naysayers. They asked the questions out of their concern, their fear, and just plain curiosity. There were words that were often negative. She was asked, "Are you really going to move that far away, just you and Christoff? You're already packing and you don't know 100% that you have the job?" Jewels would respond very politely, 'that she knew what God had promised and she knew what he had spoken to her' and "YES" she and Christoff were out of there.'

It was exactly one month later that the long awaited phone call came. Hamilton had called every day since Jewels had returned to Louisville. He asked the question again, "any word yet?" He encouraged Jewels to hold on they would be calling soon. And they did. That day there was a female on the other end of the phone. She asked

Jewels if she was still ready to relocate, and the female on the phone was calling to officially offer her the lead role. It was a full time position playing the character of Zawadi, in Walt Disney World's production of *"The Festival of the Lion King."* Jewels was holding her breath the whole time the lady was speaking. She was just amazed at what was happening. The reality had come that God heard Jewels prayer that night, and He sent her an angel. Jewels and Christoff were on their way, taking only what could fit inside her 1995 Sable. God had already promised Jewels that she could leave the past behind her because He was going to restore it all. There was Christoff with his big eyes, big smile from ear to ear, and those beautiful dimples that popped whenever he smiled. He was ready for this great new adventure. Jewels' sister offered to drive them to Florida. Katie had driven great distances before, so this was like a piece of cake for her. Jewels had already said her goodbyes. The family had a huge dinner, a means of celebration for the new journey. Jewels' Granny Emma had prayed a prayer over Jewels and Christoff. Everyone in that circle knew that heaven had received that prayer. That morning Jewels

felt so many emotions, they were quite overwhelming. As Jewels sat in the passenger seat, Katie sat in the driver's seat, and Christoff sat snug and ready to get the journey started. A sigh of relief came over Jewels. The next thing that happened made Jewels cry almost uncontrollably. The tears would not stop. Katie in her sweet voice asked Jewels, "Are you just overwhelmed?" Jewels' response was, "Yes, it's a lot, but I am ready to sing before nations." The "keeper of her dreams" held on to her dreams for her until she had the strength to hold them again and walk into them. God answered her prayers on so many levels. Hamilton, the "keeper of her dreams" helped Jewels out of the dark place. Now she is singing for the nations!!!!

This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features multiple sets of three horizontal lines each, designed to guide letter formation. Each set consists of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line. These sets are repeated vertically down the entire page, providing ample space for practicing cursive or other handwriting styles. The paper is otherwise completely blank, with no margins, text, or illustrations.

**JARED R.
KOYLE**

Massachusetts

Mothers

Who is a mother - an angel, a saint?
More kind and beautiful than a brush stroke
can paint.
Mothers listen and comfort and cuddle with
care.
There's warmth in their smile that is loving
and fair.
You can hear her reminding, and teaching,
encouraging,
And scolding, but only when one's
deserving.
She's often found praying to God, on her
knees.
She's precious, her worth is far above rubies.

There's another mother, the first to teach
giving.
This mother was Eve, the Mother of all
living.
She's a marvelous figure, in history, debated.
Yet Creation wasn't final 'til Eve was
created.
She was not unconscious to the choice she
pursued.
The forbidden fruit, she knew, was the right
kind of food.
Full of knowledge and wisdom, she saw

through the deception,
Eve understood pain and true joy, would
come through conception.
'Cause of her, now, we are. It's amazing to
know,
Through the birth of a baby, God's children
can grow.

But what of those women, through no choice
of their own,
Would like to have children, but can't as it's
known.
The promise is, one day, whether in this life
or the next
Their heart's desire will be granted, in some
glorious context.
We do not know just how God will make
this transpire,
'Cept through God's love for women with a
Mother's desire.

Now, what of you men, who struggle to
find,
How to teach your children to love and be
kind?
If you want your children to love one
another,
The secret's in the way that you treat their
mother.

How can you know if all these things are
true?

Just ask God, He'll tell you. He'll whisper to
you.

He'll touch your heart and help you
remember,

That the first love you knew, came from
your mother.

**TANYA
LIVERMAN**

Virginia

Loved By Our Mothers

Are there really words that truly describe
how a mother's love can deliver life?
Not just through travail or after hard labor,
but a deeper work that brings great favor.
She was your life's source as you grew
inside,
not knowing the years by you she'd abide:
with every hiccup and each little kick,
through all discomfort, or when she felt
sick,
with every stretchmark or belly
outstretched,
your mom still loved you and had no
regrets.
So when the time came to cut life's cable,
she exchanged her strength for God's, who
was able.
Through each contraction and ring of fire,

she did not give up; you were her desire.
Through the final push and your very first
breath,
though the cord was cut, she knew what
came next.
Her pain that ended was replaced with joy.
She handled intense times with extreme
poise.
Therefore, you nor I can fathom the love
we see exemplified and sent from above.
Any mother's love can nourish all needs,
extremely matchless to any good deed.
Protective by trade for all who give birth
from the heart or womb, she still put you
first!
For those adopted and given in love,
the same love applies for her choice was
tough.
She knew the outcome was separation,
so she called God for your preparation.

She didn't endure for selfish reasons.
Because of mom's love, you live through
seasons.
You were birthed in love for the world to
see
knowing it was the way it had to be.
Opportunities and prosperity
were some of the things she gave selflessly.
For sacrificing is a selfless act
to keep you alive and families intact.
There is a purpose in all of God's work.
Don't think for a day that she didn't hurt.
Adoption is love given by two moms,
Embraced and exchanged by two sets of
arms.
Biological or adoptive mom,
she will hold your hand to help you stay
calm.
Contrary to myths this love keeps giving.
Her love reminds you why you're still living.

If you are struggling with how to move on,
keep her in your heart and she won't be
gone.

Your life began in such a special way
Neither mom will ever forget that day.
People's perceptions take them by surprise.
A mother's deep love goes beyond our
eyes.

A big warm smile, a nurturing touch,
pats on the shoulder, mothers give so
much.

Those times you fell hard and her arms
caught you,
when others gave up, but she still sought
you.

When all hope was gone, she still had your
back.

When you had nothing, she filled where you
lacked.

Encouraging words filled your every day.

When you didn't call, she knew how to
pray.

No recognition, nor did she want fame,
but longed to see you carry out your name.

We've never met God who's like no other
But we feel Him when we're loved by our
mothers.

**ESTELLE
NELSON**

Kentucky

She Calls Herself Cinderella but, I Call Her BEAUTIFUL....

I remember the days when she would tell me the stories of her childhood and how the stories were told with such passion, pain and hurt. The willingness to release such information to such a youthful little girl as me, was amazing yet, now understandable. One, she had no one else to share her truths with and (two) she wanted to shield me from similar hurts.

The first of many stories told to me was the one of her parent's love, hate marriage and how she felt that she was the blame. "Blamed for what?" I said. She explained that she was blamed for looking, acting and being loved by her father, more than he loved her mother. It didn't make sense to me then but, as I got older and the stories were repeated

consecutively over and over again,
reasoning became clearer.

Cinderella was a cute little girl with cocoa brown skin, petite shaped body form with what she would always say, “chicken legs”, and the biggest thing on her was her butt! She has the brightest smile. It lit up the entire street when she was happy. She was always helpful and giving without complaint.

She was the older sister to three very handsome but, spoiled boys and the younger sister to a life that was only shared for six joyful months before, the Lord called her sister home to be with him. It seems this is where the challenges of life began for Cinderella and her family. After, the death of the first child, her father who had become very financially and socially successful for that time period as a Black Man in the 1950's had as well, picked up the habit of gambling and fast women. And as time progressed on within the loving marriage the father had

moreover, become very verbally and physically abusive to his wife.

After, the brothers were born and the divorce was final with her mother and father, the woman who called herself, Cinderella became the mental target. Once again, she looked like her father, talked like him and was very much loved by him. Her mother couldn't stand it! To punish the father, she would make Cinderella clean the house from stem to stern daily with no help from the boys; she would yell and blame her for things her brothers would do; her mother would accuse her of mistakes and faults of others who hurt her; as well, she would give her very negative views of what and who men are while shoving church down her throat. Her brothers were not required to do much of anything but, play sports, keep their grades up and go to college. Cinderella was told she was not smart enough to go further than high school and she should just hope to marry

and have some babies and maybe be good at that.

As a young woman of twenty Cinderella met a man, fell in love and had a love child. She thought she was scot free of the hell she had lived in for twenty years. Unexpectedly, the love of her life had to go away. She could not understand how and why this man was leaving her and her love child. The reality was that he had a job that required him to leave the country for a short time but, he promised to come back. He even made plans for her until his return. All Cinderella saw was her father leaving her mother, she and her brothers all over again. The pain and stigma of this happening to her again created such vengeance! She vowed to never let the love of her life, see her nor, her child again. She felt therefore, they would never be hurt again.

Cinderella needed love and comfort to console her hurt and separation. She went to her mother and was rejected! She was

told to take on her own baby and problems and she was sent on her way. Her father comforted her with love and words but, had no stable shelter or support for her so with the resilience she had built up inside of her from her past she moved forward.

Cinderella became a loving and caring woman through her pain.... How you wonder? Through forgiveness.....

Cinderella has, had several significant relationships throughout the years. She had a life of brutal physical abuse from her second marriage; and that marriage did not last long in fact, it was annulled. The next unsuccessful relationship was short lived due to emotional abuse and misunderstanding. This was a man who was more attached to his mother than to the woman he was in a relationship with. He was a man, fifteen years her senior (her sugar daddy); and she had the longest relationship with him. He was also a man with an alcoholic and drug

addiction. I would say, this summed up her mother and father all in one.

After, separating from her first love, Cinderella lost her beauty momentarily. When she dedicated her life to forgiveness God allowed her beauty to shine again. As you can tell, she has endured such some heinous relationships through her journey. Cinderella has contributed many great deeds and works throughout her life. A true survivor is she.

I can remember the days when she would get up at 4am to get herself ready for work and get her children up and ready for school. She would then make sure that they would have a nice hot cornmeal, oatmeal, or Wheaties breakfast. She would then dash off to the bus stop. She would do all of that by six thirty in the morning so she could get to get to work on time. She was very active in her community. She worked with the local parks and community centers to clothe

and feed people when, her own cupboard was limited. My Cinderella was a mentor at her church for many years and taught many other children as well as her own about Jesus Christ and of his importance. She supported her brothers in every area of their lives even when she did not get the same back. She supported every man in her life after her first love, even when they did not deserve it! And she never stopped telling her children how much she loved them even, when they didn't want to hear it. I cannot remember a time when Cinderella would not use the word "LOVE". I believe that this is her healing word for life.

She spoke of her mother and father all the time. She spoke about the battle but she would also speak of the love she had for them. I believe that she called herself Cinderella because that was who she saw. But, I called her Beautiful because that's who I saw.

Beauty speaks to me in many ways. What you do, what you say, how you respond to others, and most of all how you love. Throughout everything. This woman has really LOVED.....

Thank you **BEAUTIFUL...**

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

NYCEA PATTERSON

Kentucky

It was on a late Saturday night; 10:45pm to be exact, with my stomach full from eating out an hour earlier, the only thing on my mind was getting in my warm bed, wrapping myself in my sheets and counting sheep. But reality has a way of setting in no matter how far off you are gone off in your imaginary world, and my mother was the president of the 'Welcome to reality Club'. Then without a doubt, I heard her scream, No; yell my name, calling me into her closet.

"You know your great-grandmothers' birthday party is tomorrow."

"Yeah mom I know, why, what's up?"

"Your granny wants you to write a poem for her."

"WHAT? Tonight? Do I have to read it? Why didn't you tell me earlier?"

"Yes, you have to write it tonight and read it tomorrow; I know you can do it, that's why I didn't stress about it."

If I ever had any doubts about a face having the ability to fall completely to the floor, they were proven wrong that night. I politely turned on my heels, and walked out of the closet, through her open door, and into my room. I shut my door, walked over to the bed that I so lovingly admired earlier, took my pillow, lowered my head in it and did a good scream in it. I was lost, and the writer's block was so thick in the air, I had to crack my window and tell myself to breathe. Looking through my window I saw complete and total darkness...yes of course jumping out the window did cross my mind. But I didn't instead I turned away and looked up at my bare ceiling and sent up a silent prayer. Suddenly feeling a boost of encouragement, I sat at my computer staring at a blank desktop, looking at every icon on the screen.

Then I thought of the one inspiration that has never ceased to fail me, music. I clicked my *iTunes* icon and scrolled to *India Arie*, hoping her soulful sounds could reduce the

thick atmosphere of writer's block, and indeed it did. I forgot about her medley of songs dedicated to her ancestors before her. I let the intense lyrics pierce my ears and indulge my heart, in my time of desperation.

Young people, who talk to
Old people, it would make us
Better people, all around

The lyrics struck a chord, and now it was my time to play. My great-grandmother was the mother of 11 children, and clearly lived an extensive life. Going over to her house was somewhat monumental, looking at the piles of obituary clippings cut out from the local newspaper scattered along the piano sitting in the living room. And out of all those obituaries, not one of them having her included in them, made me question. How has my great-grandmother lived this long? She has a general good health report for her age, 104, a short cancer scare a few years back but that was basically it. If it

weren't for the intervention of her family, she would still probably attempt driving. She had to get her strength from somewhere. Then as the writer's block in the air quickly thinned and the observation felt as if it hit me with a pile of bricks. It was my great-grandmothers' faith in God that kept her living such a courageous life. This poem I was writing absolutely had to include something about God.

My great-grandmother is one of the most devoted members at her church, not surprisingly, and she not only grew up in church, but also started her whole life in it. She met her husband in church, and raised her 11 children in the church, so they could not stray too far from what they've always known.

As the very thoughts pounded my head, with absolute precision, I opened up a blank word processing document and let these thoughts that were pounding in my head, stimulate blood through my fingers, and put pressure on the loving keyboard.

How do you measure an infallible life?
Do you count the strife the tests and trials?
Or do you count the trust in the meek and
mild?
Do you count the prayers sent to the
father?
Or do you count the messages witnessed by
his followers?

My great-grandmother was born in 1910, in
the height of racism. I remember
profoundly when she spoke of how she
hated fire hydrants, and didn't understand
why they were all over the street. I was
highly confused about this statement; a fire
hydrant is a safety tool used throughout the
public. But if you saw your father being
sprayed by a water hose out of a fire truck,
because of his skin color, the sight of a fire
hydrant would vex your spirit as well.

Walk down that 5 mile road
To fight for an education
Or step in the church

To find the Lord's edification
You can even fall in love, Elope at 27
Or give birth to a baby boy in 1937
You could look into 11 other eyes
And tell them you love them
Tuck them into bed, Kiss and Hug them
You could take them to church
And make sure they know God loves them
Fear them with discipline
So they run to obedience
So when they look in the mirror they only
see you in them

When I think of my great-grandmother's life
I automatically think purpose. For the
simple fact without her, there would be no
me, she represents pure purpose, so many
generations after me can live on. I even
think about when I was just born, and had
spent a month in the hospital because I
refused to drink my bottle. Do you know
who was the first person to help me to

drink my bottle? Not a doctor, not a nurse, my mother or father, it was my great-grandmother. She heard about my complications, came to the hospital and conquered the task that was at hand.

My writing has evolved like my great-grandmother's years, with passion and maturity. I have found myself writing with a larger vocabulary, and purpose. I want to make sure everything I write has profound purpose and reasoning behind it. This writing piece I am typing now has a definite purpose, that my great-grandmother's infallible life has inspired my writing in very large and small ways. I hope if and when I live to be 104 years old, my great-grandchildren can write a poem about me spur of the moment at 10:45 at night, and have nothing but purpose filled stanzas and heart rhymes that match a sweet rhythm, reading my life with infallible words.

JULIA A. ROYSTON

Indiana

What Does a Mother Look Like?

I realize that everybody feels that their mother is the best. I am no exception. I do feel like my mother is the best. So, what does a mother look like, Daisy Louise Spencer Foree. That's what a mother looks like.

A woman of hard work

My mom was raised on a farm and knew nothing but, hard work. From sun up to sun down, there was something to do. Prepare for meals, clean up from the meals that were just eaten and then preparing for the next meal. Planting, weeding, growing and harvesting the food that would soon be eaten at the large dinner table. She took care of the livestock that would, after processing, also would be on the dinner table. She did the canning, sampling and storing of the canned goods for the dinner

table. Hard work is my mother's middle name. Now retired, to this day, whatever she is doing, she is working hard at it. She is going to give it her all.

A woman of faith

My mother was raised in a household of strong faith. She was an Apostolic by birth and so am I. When you are raised Apostolic, your children will be born Apostolic as well. It is the way of the Apostolic denomination. You don't get a choice. The choice is either heaven or hell, Jesus or satan, that's it. My mother was a little different than the normal women of faith. She got an overdose of love, fun and warmth with her faith. She would tell you the truth but, in love. It took much faith in God to meet a young man only standing four feet eleven and believe in his words to love her forever. It took a lot of faith in God to believe that this young man was going to take her places that she had never seen and allow her to live a life beyond her wildest dreams. That's faith. He was short,

chocolate and cute but, had big dreams, big ideas and a big heart. Her faith in God allowed her to have faith in her husband. Her faith raised three girls and helped raise two grand-daughters who will be the pride of the next and future generation.

A woman of passion and compassion

My mother gave much and God always gave her a replenished supply. She spent more than sixty plus years at one church. My mother held almost every position in church except being the preacher. She was a Sunday school teacher, women's auxiliary president and vice-president, usher, choir member, altar worker and deacon's wife for life. My mother has always loved people and loves to see them enjoy life. If you are hungry, she will feed you. If you don't have something to wear and she owns it, she will give it to you. If she doesn't have your size, she will find somebody who is your size and ask you to bring clothes for them. Don't have a ticket to the luncheon, dinner or breakfast? You do now because my mother

bought your ticket, gave you the outfit to wear and probably picked you up so that you had a ride to get to the event.

Her passion for people and compassion to people makes me who I am today. She didn't give that passion and compassion away to others without making sure that my father, my sisters and me felt it every single day of our lives. What does a mother look like? My mother.

A woman who knows no strangers

To this day, I go through airports, large conferences and any other event looking at people's faces to see if there is anybody that I know. My mother did this when I was younger and still does it to this day. She can sit down next to a complete stranger and try to make some connection with them whether it is food, sports or current events. Don't get too close. She might hug you with those big loving arms that want to show you her love. She strategically places her perfume because she never knows who may need a hug that day. The fragrance

memory will last a lifetime. Estee Lauder Beautiful will be implanted in your memory forever.

A woman who handles her business

A woman who loves her children

A woman who loves her husband

A woman who loves herself

**TARA
THARPE**

Illinois

It Can't Wait

My grandmother, Luella Royston, played an important role of my life. She was like my 'other' mother. She was definitely considered an old school grandma- she didn't tolerate disrespect; her favorite phrase was 'God loves you and so do I'; she had an opinion and didn't mind sharing it; she loved Jesus and felt like you should too; she wore her finest Sunday-go-to-meeting suits, matching hat, purse, and shoes; she pursed her lips before letting you know you stepped out of line; she hugged you and kissed you every time she saw you; and she could cook!!!! She was known for making homemade biscuits and a cherry cheesecake. She always had something she was making, but as she got older she stopped cooking some of her other dishes, but she always seemed to have ingredients on hand for those two things. And for a long time, she didn't share her cheesecake recipe, but as she grew older she began to share it and several of her grandchildren had it.

One Saturday afternoon, as I was driving down the street, I felt the urge to call Grandma and ask her for her cheesecake recipe. This seemed like an odd request because as I said, I was driving down the street, but I couldn't shake the feeling to call her right then. So, I called her and told her that I lost the recipe for the cheesecake (again) and needed it. She said 'Gal, I can't believe you called me asking me for this recipe again, when I'm making a cheesecake now.' She explained that she was making a cheesecake to take to my Aunt Janet's home for the birthday celebration of my Aunt Chet. She told me that it was a surprise because my Aunt Janet told her that she didn't need to bring anything- just come and show up and spend some time with her daughters. Well, Grandma didn't believe in showing up to a meal without something- so, she decided to make a cheesecake. As she explained the recipe to me, we laughed and talked about a little of this and a little of that. After a few minutes, she said 'Now listen gal, I don't want to spend too much money on this long-distance phone call'. I

reassured her that I was paying for this long-distance call and we could talk as long as we wanted to. She laughed and talked for quite a while, until she finished making the cheesecake. This conversation took place on a Saturday afternoon in late October.

On the next day, Sunday afternoon, I received a call from my Mother stating that Grandma had a stroke. I thought that can't be- I was just talking to Grandma. My Aunt Chet had the same Sunday routine for years when taking my Grandmother to church. She'd call her in the morning to check and see if she wanted to attend church. If she said 'Yes' (which was most Sundays), she'd tell her when she'd be there to pick her up. My Aunt was always on time and the two of them were NEVER late for church. But this Sunday, when my Aunt Chet got there to pick her up, my Grandmother wasn't dressed in her Sunday-go-to meeting suit, with matching hat, purse, and shoes. Instead her clothes were out, but still hung up on the door of her room and my Grandmother was in the bed, with the covers pulled up over her. She couldn't speak and my Aunt knew

that something wasn't right. She called the ambulance and they rushed Grandma to the hospital, where it was confirmed that she had a stroke. While she was still alive, she could no longer speak!

See what a difference a day makes? If I would not have called Grandma, I would have been guilt-laden because I would have missed the chance to speak with her one more time. She passed from that stroke on Nov. 20 of that same year. But, there's a more to this story than that...

A few days later, I spoke with my Aunt Janet and she was saying that Grandma was still in the hospital, but that she planned to still have the dinner for my Aunt Chet. She was saying that it wouldn't be the same without Momma there, but I told her that she left you a gift to take to the birthday dinner. She said that there was no surprise at Momma's house. She was at the house and everything looked perfectly normal no presents were lying around. I told her to look in the refrigerator and there's a cheesecake. She said 'Tara- Momma didn't

make a cheesecake. I told her not to bring anything to the dinner and she said ok'. I told her to open the refrigerator. And sure enough, we both began to cry as she saw the present that Momma left.

I wasn't there to taste that cheesecake, but I'm sure it tasted even better than ever. We sometimes go through life as though we can catch up with the ones we love tomorrow. Or we'll stop and smell the roses- tomorrow. Or we'll live our lives fully- tomorrow. Or we'll devote our lives to Christ- tomorrow. But what if something happens and our tomorrow never materializes? Why can't we live fully and intentionally present today? So, thanks to my Grandmother, I learned an invaluable lesson about following the prompting to do something now. She taught me that life really is short and that we need to treasure our loved ones as the gifts that they are. (Not to mention, I have the best cheesecake recipe and shared the gift of Grandma's last cheesecake.)

The moral of the story: Sometimes, we just can't wait...

LUCY MONIN WEBB

Wisconsin

GRACE

I'm sending youPositive Energy Today
and Every day. I Believe In All You Will Do!

Everything you do makes a difference. even
little things, even being...

YOU...makes such a difference. You were
created for Great Things, large and small.
NO shrinking or downplaying to yourself or
your talents to me. You were Born and
Created to Shine... In Your Own Special
Ways... (that means when you are quiet and
shy.. that's how you are supposed to be..
when you are happy and extroverted..
.that's how you are supposed to be.... you
are supposed to be YOU!

Do not be who or how you think the world
or society or anyone else wants you to be.
Simply be You. For You is So Very Much!!!!
When you are being yourself... just straight
out you.... your body, mind and soul align.

When you are doing the things for which
you are gifted (which there are so many)...
your energy expands and radiates out to
encompass all those in your presence, and
the "Real" light of who you are... expands
with healing love which is so very powerful.
to effect change in so many things.

You are Perfect Exactly as You Are.. Always
have been and Always Will be!!! I am
Cheering you in all you do, as you let your
light shine.

I'm cheering you as you go around, over,
under and through whatever challenges lie
before you. I'm cheering you as you let go
of things and thoughts that may hold you
back from reaching your own personal goals
and dreams or new dreams. Even thinking
of letting go of old negative mind patterns
which stop you from doing things you want
to do in your life, are huge step. (everyone
does this.... the strongest, most courageous,

and bravest.. explore and when ready...they let go of thoughts and things that hold them back...)

God Loves you even more than anyone else. He is so Very Proud of You!!! I Am so Very Proud of You!!! You are Meant to Shine in Your Way, Filled with Positive Energy, Love and Light that you radiate out to the world to reach many. This pure love and light expand and comes back to you in a steady stream, sometimes in big bursts that will fill you with such Unconditional Love and Joy, it will feel like Heaven on Earth.

God Loves You and All of Us So Much.... that even on the hard days... We know in our Soul's to Thank God and Trust God, because We are Unconditionally Loved and Created by him for a plan and purpose that he specifically created each of us to do... just by being who we are!!!

Peace

Life at times to our human eyes may seem so out of focus, until we trust and look with our soul and see....

Life is a journey of good times and challenging ones. During the difficult times it seems much like winter; the outside appears dead, gloomy and without color. Yet on the inside there are rainbows of color and growth going on.

This is much like our spiritual “mustard seed” of Unconditional Love, Patience, and Faith... though small at first... it is always growing in our Heart. If you trust this it will provide You with a Faith, Unconditional Love, and great Strength that will NOT Fail when all seems lost. You have to Trust it to See and Feel It.

Sometimes it is easy for the dark side to trip up our human mind with an illusion. We cry out... “I am all alone in this world. I don’t fit

anywhere and I just want to be loved for me and to give love.” This illusion of being alone is one of the dark sides favorite tricks to those who feel deeply. For this illusion creates a lack of Hope as it attempts to defeat the Beautiful Soul that is so very Loved. However.. these false illusions only work for a short time....

Until a Flare of Faith... A Spark of the Light of Hope Breaks the darkness...

God sending specific people into our lives and journeys who Unconditionally Love us for us, and whom we love them for them. Then, our “mustard seed” begins to grow as it is fed, nurtured, given light and love in the way it needs, and in return is blessed to do the same for these Spiritual Friends in our lives....

Our lights begin to shine again... Brighter as we cautiously at first learn to Trust in an Unconditional Love that is Real. The Love and Light keep growing to an Unconditional Love that is Beyond the Boundaries of the Human Heart. This Love Expands and Fills

the Wounds and soothes the Scars. It does not matter how long it takes. THIS Love is Patient and Real.

As we let others who Love us help us to Heal and we share our Great times, wounds and scars... slowly old wounds and scars begin to Heal.. And our tears wash away so many doubts and fears... and our Smiles emerge as our Souls begin to Flourish. We struggle... slowly at first to let go of old ways of thinking. We shed them much like the tree's do their leaves in autumn... letting the old ways and of thinking and pain fall away.. .so there is an opening for the New Growth taking place Within us.. to Bloom, Expand, Feel and Share Joy.

We continue to look with our hearts at the Beauty of Each Person. Including Ourselves.... like the many seashells on the shore... WE are all Alike and Different. The scars we carry inside and outside are a testament to our bodies and Spirit standing up to the bumping around times of this life.. so far.. They are "OUR" Medals of Courage

and Survival.... Showing.. that “OUR” Spirit..
WON’T GIVE UP. We’ll get back up when we
fall, Heal and come back Stronger because
of it.

It is really “OUR” human
imperfections that make us the “Most”
PERFECT, the “Most” ATTRACTIVE, the
“Most” REAL!

We see now that we are
Unconditionally Loved no matter how
Complicated we are. We begin to Trust
again and Know that God Loves Us So
Much, he sends Special People into OUR
Lives along our journey’s that will stand on
the base of Jesus... and with Unconditional
Love and Acceptance.. hold us up when we
feel weak and who will let us do the same
for them. They are there to share the joys,
journeys, fears, tears and to Love us... just
like Jesus does.. Unconditionally for Us
...exactly how we are at every moment of
time from Now through Eternity.

MUESSER YENIAY

Turkey

They Say

Dashing into the crowds, I ask
"are you my mother?"
to a hole of a tree
to the birds scattered on the sky
my eyes are looking at high
over my tongue, bridges are passing
over my hands..
I am inside a tale
my hair is made of tales

I grasp and press my chest cage
in my eyes, my manhood melts

dashing into the crowds, I ask
they say "I must have had a mother"

like an orange peel
they say...

I Move the Earth in My Eyes

I wish I had toes to go away from this world

whose tongue were I
when I lived
every breath was a waste in my mouth.

I came and learnt
wisdom of living -how-

my humanity piled up in poetry
in the emptiness of words
which shine like mirror

whose tongue were I
-with myself- when I live

no mother has ever *protected* me
from this world

Sand

They carried my heart and left here all
together

with

its sand

the weather is so calm

that the birds of silence are
rising

let no light but darkness be

so that we can close the eyes that
want to be open

did not the one who gave birth to us
also give birth to our pain?

-indeed which
motherhood is holy?-

they left me here

looking at sand

like an hill

if my skin had remained in my mother
I would never ask anything from her

The Voice of an Unborn Child

My eyes are closed
with my body that sucked
 light of darkness
 here I am sleeping
I do not know my body yet
 which curls like a snake

a shadow within
a human within

memories of future are in my mind

somebody will come
 and take me to the world

I suppose
 to that never world
to that cosmic wound
 to that green time
when words are shepherds
 here every sleep is

morning
no eyes

 this trip which goes
inside
 a dream bell jar

here like a brooch attached to a women's
heart

I am standing
- as if a woman left me I am sleeping -

my mind does not have
thought
nor my heart has feeling

walls of my room are my second skin
as I am here without father

I play with
my toy-god

I am one of the people who are invited
to the world

this womb cellar in which I stay
like a pot
telling me what it is going to tell
by its shadows

I have heard I have so much time to go
to the world!

Step-world

There is nobody within night
this white wall to which I touch with
my voice

darkness is like a
ball of string
filling inside me

there is nobody within night
my body is dead which likes to revive

my light wrecked darkness
they call it world
the things which
head for me without stop

I cared for the bees of silence
night and day
my ears are walls that do not let
the world in

I wiped the glass of my heart
in my body just it leaves stains

it was heart

whatever it showed was
time!

I was naked here
where light peels off
my skin

this world where I came
as if I wanted to be a child
of a woman who never
gave birth
-
is step

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