

Excerpt from *Letting Go and New Beginnings: A Mother's Poetic Journey* by Margaret Dubay Mikus, Ph.D.

Margaret reads some of these poems on her CD, *Full Blooming: Selections from a Poetic Journal*

10/8/01

Getting Ready to Leave

You don't know me that well,
whatever you have read or heard,
however revealing I might have seemed
when telling the old stories.

I never said I was perfect
or even close. I did say I was generous.
There are days when I no longer
want to be a mother after midnight...

can you possibly understand that?
When I signed on I didn't know—
couldn't conceivably have known—
how the days turn to year after year.

I am a shape shifter,
a surfer on the River,
I am slippery, illusive,
can't get a handle on.

Even so, more than can be said,
I have always loved you—
from dot to peanut to full grown,
about to fly on the wind and cast your own shade.

Do I regret? No, I don't.
Still I struggle for balance,
still I grasp at the straws
of a life of my own.

No, I would not have been the same,
you have shaped me and healed me.
So I sing late into the night...
what of that?

1/17/04

The Fierceness of Loving

Now you are gone
the silence has a presence of its own.

I have longed to get back
to my other life,

the one that continues when you leave;
my gift to you, this letting go.

I missed you the moment you left
and allowed myself that time to grieve

and keen and then as therapy
I began to clean,

partly restoring order,
partly to focus on something concrete

and unrelated, partly meditation,
fulfilling my dream of good intention.

I missed you before you left
and struggled against

the thoughts that brought tears,
for after all you were still here.

And now
to resume a life disrupted,

not to pick up the same threads exactly—
for the river of life continued to flow

carrying me to new harbors,
opening fresh possibilities.

Thank you for coming back to us,
what joy to watch you grow!

How much I have learned
about the fierceness of loving.

2/25/03

The Poet

I am my mother's daughter
and I am the Mother of my Self—
one who made the form
and one who filled it.

And I am the mother of my daughter,
a beauty like no other.
She forgot to wash her socks until midnight and,
smiling her smile, asked if I could put them in the dryer
and I did...easily...again.

Who rules on any given day?
What boundaries between the roles I play
tying me to sanity?

No instructions, no models or even myths.
In all the worlds there ever were,
no one has ever been exactly like me...or you.

Or has done what we are about to attempt.
I am tempted to stop, not life, but struggle
to be more, to become what I imagine.

But a poet who is fearless,
who carries on regardless,
whose words are kind and true and honest

is more than essential for survival...
is the compassionate and dispassionate glue
that holds it all together;

5/15/05

Delivery

When they are gone
and it is quiet,
more than one moan
will escape my lips
for the sorrows in
delivering a child
into this wild world.

When they return
as they must,
to the womb of their birth,
the joy of holding them,
again the pain of parting,
in delivering a child whole
back into this wide, raw world.

They have come
as I have come, with a mission
as yet unfolding,
a quest, a gift,
a thirst for adventure;
knowing, I let them slip
through my outstretched fingertips.

When they are gone
and it is quiet
I do not mourn
the baby, the toddler,
the youth they were,
losses inescapable.
I look straight across
into clear eyes and hearts
and see my own reflection.

When they are gone
and the air settles
from their last vibration,
I see myself crying
in their rooms, in pain,
in relief, in loss expressed
as they go delivered
into their wild, wide world.

But do not leave me
sitting there tears streaming,
the world for me begins to turn again
as what was gestating
ripens into next delivery,
what was fed and nurtured

now blooms.

7/25/05

Bittersweet Summer

The whole summer was like
a Band-aid being ripped off slowly,
and the whole summer was like
eating a Dairy Queen vanilla cone
melting in the heat, slowly dripping down my hand
as my tongue lapped at the sweetness.

Days of peace and
days of chaos,
light and dark intermixed,
often surprises.

Getting ready for,
and being in the pure moment;
anticipation of simplicity and solitude,
and dread of separation.

Choosing not to think,
thinking too much;
trying my best,
stumbling, falling, flying....

Who knows what is right
and for whom
and for when?

But in this linear way we have
of experiencing
one thing is certain:
the end of summer will come.
And in the other realms,
for better or worse,
this summer is endless.

8/6/05

Sheepdog in Transition

I have been a sheepdog
nipping at the heels of the flock,
keeping them safe,
getting them home for dinner.

But I am not a sheepdog,
or a wolf in sheep's clothing,
I am just a sheepdog by
circumstance and training.

What am I then
below the shaggy skin,
can I tell anymore
what or who is within?

Yes: For some time now
I have been preparing
to unzip the heavy coat,
remove the familiar shaggy head,

release this temporary disguise,
and restore the prospect of flight.
I admit some small sliver of fear
in anticipating this future laid out

when I leave the fields and the flocks
—or they leave me—
free to fly and shimmer in full Technicolor
singing in rich Dolby surround-sound,

knowing a job well done.

1/11/06

Seasoned Woman

Seasoned like a succulent feast
with spices both wild and ordinary,
used in unusual, unexpected combinations,
rich, complex, sweet, sour, simple, bitter-bite,
surprising, challenging the senses, satisfying.

And seasoned like wood now ready for good use,
waiting to be crafted into
something of great beauty and value,
an exquisite table polished to mirror sheen,
a hand-carved boat lovingly left deliberately rough,
a delicate or sturdy figurine shaped
from an almost remembered dream.

And seasoned by the flow of days,
some hard beyond bearing:
*what doesn't break you
makes you stronger.*

Young, green, soft-wood no good for burning,
seasoned hardwood ready for flame.

2/24/08

After You Left

Constantly
I am watching out for you.
Even when I am not watching,
I am watching.

I cannot say why this is true
or when it began,
it feels like forever
my love.

So do me a great favor
and become...not less carefree
nor less careless,
nor even more careful,

for being full of care
is not it exactly.
Be more aware of your choices,
more in tune with your inner wisdom.

For you are wise
dear one.

And if I am selfish
and want you to stay with me
when it is clearly time to go,
forgive...

and go.
Call me when you arrive.
I will be waiting.

10/17/09

From Mary Jane and Stephenie Meyer
For Ira, Bob, Geary, and Eric

Something that shatters
pre-existing life structure
stretching out to the foreseeable future.

No restoration
of equilibrium
or the familiar,

the details
don't matter:
a choice point where

all is divided into
before...and after
and darkness is the dominant color,

the decisive end...of what was,
the promising beginning...of what is:

verdant, vivid vibration,
riot of sensation,
vibrant colors of all description

almost beyond bearing.

You get to the point
where you say: This
lightening bolt that struck me

was the best thing
that ever happened.