Your Baby is Okay

Author - Mary Ellen Main

At first, it disturbed me when I realized

she didn't know who I was.

"Mother, it's me. Your daughter. Leslie."

She'd smile as if to say, "That's nice, whoever you are."

It only got worse as the days passed.

And though I never got used to it I started to recognize

that was her for now,

even though she didn't recognize me.

She began to fret about "the children."

She kept asking, "Why is the baby crying? Is the baby okay?"

So I found a doll for her. She'd hold the doll and talk to it.

The baby was okay.

As Mother was comforted knowing the baby was okay, I began to find comfort.

Maybe I was her baby now.

As she regressed to a time when she'd been a young mother, I got to see

that nurturing I'd always known but had been too young to recall.

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As time passed, I realized she'd become the little girl with her dolly.

As she cradled her baby, I saw the spark of nurturing that had begun in her

from the time she'd been a child--something I'd have had no way of knowing

if I hadn't gone through this time with her.

Her days drew to a close and she became less responsive.

I counted it a privilege to sit beside her bed and hold her hand.

Sometimes she would fret, looking at me for some answer. Finally, with words barely audible,

carried on the lightest breath, she'd ask, "Is the baby okay?"

My face touched hers as I drew close. "Oh, yes. The baby is okay." She sighed

and drifted off to sleep. Mother to daughter, sister to sister, daughter to mother, I wondered

if she ever dreamed about me and who I was in her dreams.

I'd wanted her to know me, but, instead, I got to know her in ways I never thought possible.

"Yes, Mother . . . your baby is okay."

About the Author - Mary Ellen Main

Your Baby is Okay was inspired by watching Mary Ellen's friend go through taking care of her mother as her mother's Alzheimer's progressed. She hopes the poem can encourage others going through the same situation.