

FROM ONE MOM

*to a Mother*



A COLLECTION OF POETRY & MOMISMS

JESSICA URLICHS

# From One Mom to a Mother

Jessica Urlichs

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*Dedication:*

*To my husband, my greatest supporter and my two children, my  
greatest teachers.*

# My Everything

I want to tell you everything I know,  
carry you and guide you.

Yet somehow,  
as your tiny finger points to things in wonder  
and your eyes meet mine,  
the paradigm shifts.

I once thought I was to show you the world,  
when all along you came to show me.

# Mama You're Beautiful

I see you Mama, and something about you has changed.

I don't think I've ever seen you more beautiful. You may have forgotten this amongst the throes of motherhood and find it hard to see it through the blur of these early days, but I see you.

Your hair may not be blow-waved like it used to be, but now it's a crown above your head, messy and perfectly imperfect.

Your hands seem different, they may not be as manicured, but they're warm and comforting. They're stronger, as they hold the world and the touch of those fingertips are someone's world.

Yes, your heart aches, but it's never stretched and been so swollen before with love, so of course it will ache sometimes.

You've always carried yourself well, but now you seem more womanly, stronger, yet beautifully vulnerable.

Your eyes are begging to see some darkness for more than a couple of hours at a time. I know you're tired, but they still shine, especially when you look at your miracle.

Your body may feel different, but under those baggy clothes is the greatest gift to you and to what you've created. It nurtures, it bends and breaks, it's resilient, it's exceptional.

You may be feeling lonely at times, or tired of being at home, but you truly look beautiful here, like all of a sudden home has a new meaning.

You are someone's home.

Your smile has changed, it's now one that knows things, secrets of contentment. There's not as much energy behind it right now, but it's never been so pure.

The way you sit there, holding your baby like it's an extension of yourself, a natural, I've never seen anything so perfect.

I'm so proud of you and how amazing you are.

Mama, you're beautiful.



# Rebirth

Hours after I gave birth, I lay there holding my sleeping baby in bed and I said to my mother, in awe, that I couldn't believe that women did this every day. How utterly incredible the female body is, how strong we are within. She stared at me nodding with tears in her eyes. I remember thinking about how I came into this world, scared, naked, gasping for air. The same day my baby did. The same way he did. But me, reborn as a mother. A different existence entirely. I was me, but softer, less sure, more needed than ever before. The moment he arrived the world seemed different. Remarkable. Lonely. Exceptional. Scary. And then I fell in love. Then I believed. Then suddenly my world was in my arms. And it frightened me and calmed me all at once. I had changed in an instant. The day he was born, I was too.

# Dear Mama,

I don't remember if our house was big or small or if we rented or owned.

I don't remember if you had a fancy car, or if we had to take the bus.

I don't remember if the house was clean and tidy or if it was covered in washing piles and scattered toys.

I don't remember if my pram was new or second hand or if I had the latest new toy or designer clothes.

I don't remember if you were dressed up or if your face was bare, it always looked perfect to me.

I don't remember if you had a lot of money or whether you lived pay check to pay check.

I don't remember if we went out every day or went on expensive holidays.

I don't remember how sometimes you got angry or cried or had to walk out of the room to take a breath.

I don't remember a schedule, a checklist or any expectations other than just you.

What I do remember is feeling safe.

I remember your comfort and how you kept me warm.

I remember your face above me when I cried for you.

I remember you would feed me when I was hungry or tired or in pain.

I remember your smell and how it would send me off to sleep, sometimes at 2:00am, then again at 4:00am.

I remember your smile, it was the first reason I smiled.

I remember how you played with me and got down on the ground with me, before I could get up.

I remember you taught me about love before anything else and how it was my constant.

I remember knowing it was the only thing I ever really needed and you gave that to me, I never had to work for it, I relaxed in it.

Thank you for teaching me that love has no limits, that it's unconditional and honest.

This is what I will remember Mama.

Thank you for giving me the best memories of all.

# I'm Your Safe Place

I get it, I get all of it.

The screams, the tears, the tantrums.

Your bottom lip drops and your eyes brim with emotions.  
Sometimes you even turn away from me.

That one rips my heart in two.

Then the sun will peak through, and the smiles will come  
for Daddy, and I'll be left here in the storm puddles.

I feel your pain because I'm also tired and torn, but I get it  
now.

I'm that place for you.

When you have a scary dream and you call "Mummy",  
because my hugs and the sound of my voice breathes  
confidence into you.

The one that always has its lights on with the open sign  
hanging in the window.

Yes, you can air your laundry here and forget to wipe your  
feet on the door mat.

I'm that place where you can scatter your feelings over  
the floor, and I won't sweep them under the rug.

I know at times you try to hold it all together.

You can unravel here.

And I won't judge you, I'll open my arms to you.

Please fall into them when you're ready.

You've come from a place where your only expectation  
was to just be.  
Suspended in warmth and safety.  
Your beautiful rhythmic heartbeat mixing in with my own.

Out here it's different, not everyone will look at you how I  
do.  
Expectations will be thrown at you unfairly and at such a  
young age.  
Not everyone will encourage you to take your time, and  
that makes my heart ache.

But I promise you this, I will.

When you lock eyes on me in the crowd of chaos, you see  
familiarity, security, love.

I am your safe place for you to feel.

The one whose shoulder fits your head just right.

Love is unconditional here, the key will always fit and I  
don't keep receipts.

You're not at your worst, you're at your limit.  
And my love for you is limitless.

I am your home.

Always know, you're safe here with me.

# Sleep Will Come

I've never had great sleepers; in fact, our nights have been in pieces for a long time, and we've been the glue.

Last night as I was being suspended into sleep the cries began. I was halfway between thinking they were a visitor in my dream, until my subconscious gave me a rude awakening.

I was up, sighing off my slumber, again.

Desperate, I thought 'What am I doing wrong?'

I thought about how many other mothers are up with their toddlers still, as I drag myself out of bed, my legs a weary vehicle down the hallway.

I thought about how in a few hours we'll all be up to start the day, moon still shining as the kids eat their breakfast, my nose in a mug.

I thought of the parents whose heads stay carved into their pillows all night, without the undercurrent of anxiety.

I feel a longing for that as I start to make the auto pilot shushing noises as I round his door.

I thought about how my husband and I curse each other's creaky bones when we creep around at night, we curse our BONES! How it's comical but also sad how long we've been stitching up tired wounds.

I climb into bed with him preparing for knees in the chest and elbows to the face and think about the people who

have asked me, “Is he still waking in the night?”, no longer in the understanding newborn tone.

I wonder if I’m taking the easy way out as I lay there with his little hand on my cheek, his cries subsiding. I watch the landscape of his face in the shadows and listen to his breathing as he drifts off.

So I let the doubt wash off me as I feel a sense of safety too.

I think about not chasing the ‘should’, but rather following my instinct instead.

That the battle only really begins when sleep becomes the only answer.

That separating myself from him would only divide me.

That as mothers we only really come apart when we ignore our intuition.

I don’t have the answers, but I know I won’t regret going to them when they need me.

Neither will you.

Sleep will come, soon, I hope.

# Lessons of Breastfeeding

Here's what breastfeeding has taught me:

To have a patience like no other.

To have trust, there were no measurements or taking notes, I went by her cues and she didn't let me down.

I was forced to sit down and just stop, yes I noticed the dust on the TV cabinet, but I took a deep breath and took her in too.

It was a great aid to get her to sleep, it worked bloody wonders! No rods over here as she doesn't need it now, nothing is forever.

That just because it didn't happen the first time it doesn't mean it won't with subsequent babies.

The word "natural" is misleading, it's a learned skill.

Being told to push through pain might be seen as encouraging, it can also be very damaging.

That being a part of the itty bitty titty committee doesn't mean that your feeding facilities aren't 5 star.

That it's perfectly acceptable to cry over spilt milk when that milk is breastmilk.

There is no time limit on how long or often you feed, those books will never translate the language you and your baby will cultivate together. So listen to each other.



That if you can't breastfeed you haven't "failed" we need to talk about the real stuff. The more we do, we'll see these expectations only derived from not being open in the first place.

We need support for mothers who have tried to breastfeed but are unable to, there is a great wound there mentally, it needs addressing (no pun).

That a good feeding chair is essential, you'll be there a lot.

That exclusive breastfeeding is one heck of a commitment & one heck of an achievement.

That support, no matter how you feed your child, can shape your whole journey.

That anyone who has an issue with breastfeeding in public should be the one who gets up to leave.

That grabbing each boob to work out which one was fed off last is accurate.

Catching her eye in these moments is something no photo would ever capture.

I'm sad our journey has now ended, yet so grateful for what we shared along the way.

But I'll never be sad that I have the privilege of watching her grow through each milestone. Whatever she leaves behind means I've done my job in helping her reach where she's going to next.

My greatest learning of all.

# Unseen

What will it take?

Me to plaster a smile on as you walk in the door?

“Hi Honey, how was your day”?

Oh how I thought I would be this wife/ mother.

Instead you walk into a house with crap everywhere, kids in nappies, me with my maternity bra unclasped and a face that says “where the heck were you 5 minutes ago?”

How I desperately wanted to be the wife who had dinner ready, my shit “together”.

Kids happy, TV off.

The one who would sit there undistracted while you talked about your day.

Instead I’m a bit resentful, resentful that you had a proper lunch today, that you had breaks, that you left the house. I also barely look you in the eye, because I’m “too busy”.

I know after seeing you with the kids for a few hours on your own your face a bit whiter than before, eyes a bit more bloodshot. I won’t lie, I feel good. Almost as if you deserve to feel what I do on those harder days.

But isn’t this a ‘lose lose’ game I’m playing.

I know I have set the bar high for myself, so high that we’re all struggling to see the top while we’re gasping for air below.

Maybe we wouldn’t be gasping if I just took a deep breath and put my expectations aside.

Because you've never asked any of these things from me.  
I have.

So I ask myself.

What will it take?

For you to feel everything I do?

No.

I know deep down I don't want that either.

I think I just want to feel seen sometimes.

Like I see you here, doing everything you can in the  
spaces you're available to.

I want to feel seen, but I'm forgetting to see you too.

Like really see you.

And maybe, I am being seen.

by everybody, but myself.

# From One Mom to a Mother

People will paint you pictures about motherhood in rainbows, you will forget that rain comes first. The brightness of that rainbow will always outshine the grey, but it's ok to talk about the grey, you should.

You will rise up in the dead of the night, time after time. It will hurt, your bones will ache. You'll swear across pillowcases as to whose turn it is to get up. But you will sleep again.

You will question your identity, you will miss her. But maybe no one told you the pieces of the puzzle go back together from the inside out. You will find yourself again. There were two people born that day.

You will cry, your baby will cry. Some evenings as a hush finally falls over your mess ridden house, the sound will be ringing in your ears. But you will also laugh until you cry. There is so much to look forward to.

You'll wonder if you're doing everything right, you'll panic, second guess, google search, you'll wonder if you have enough for your baby. Your baby has you, you are enough.

You'll be busy, yet also feel as if you're achieving nothing. You're achieving everything that truly matters in this precious moment.

Those washing piles? You'll be folding those tiny clothes away into storage soon, sooner than you realise.  
I'm not saying to enjoy every moment, you won't, but these moments do pass.  
Don't wish for it too much.

Some days will be a lucky dip with the mood in the house.  
Don't try and do everything the same as the day before so they have that long lunch nap.  
You will have good days and bad days.  
That's normal.

You will have days where you'll feel depleted from all the giving.  
Try, really do try to fill your cup and not just everyone else's. That doesn't make you selfish, it makes you a better Mother.

You'll suddenly think of your own mother and everyone who did this before you.  
You'll have a new found respect for each and every mother or father climbing this same mountain.  
You'll fall, but keep climbing.  
The view is beautiful and so is the view behind you.

You might think some days you can't do this.  
That it seems impossible.  
But you can.  
You are.  
With each season comes change.  
It isn't easy.  
But it's so, so worth it.

# My Resume

Sorry I'm late,  
I should have updated my CV!  
What have I been doing  
On this two yearly degree?

Well, I've done some nursing  
I've done some juggling too  
I'm also good at herding cats  
With feeding time at the zoo  
And I'm quite the illusionist  
With peek-a-boo.

I'm a great nursery rhyme singer  
Thinking of joining a choir  
And sometimes at night  
I'm a human pacifier

But don't put that last part down  
Because that would be weird.

I'm a researcher and an analyst  
I work through many problems  
I can handle all sorts of challenges  
Throw them at me, I'll solve them.

I'm an experienced hygienist  
Nightly baths are my profession  
Oh no I'm not talking about myself  
Sorry, what was your question?

I've had some work place injuries  
Someone called it a 'rod for my back'  
But somehow I survived  
With endurance and not giving a crap.

I'm also an event planner  
I'm a taxi and a chef  
A stylist and a story teller  
And a great cleaner of mess.

I'm a director and a producer  
And let me just recap  
References during lunch is out  
My boss will be taking a nap.

I'm a teacher and a student  
Sometimes that line is blurred  
I'm a mediator and a builder  
And I translate words  
What language you ask?  
Oh you wouldn't have heard.

I'm a heavy weight champion  
A bodyguard, a judge  
A chemist and a life coach  
And I don't hold a grudge.

What do I do in my spare time?  
I go for walks around the street  
Looking like utter ass  
Muttering "please go to sleep".

What are my key attributes?  
Well I'm braver now and stronger  
I'm confident in my choices  
I can push myself a little longer.

I'm a multitasker, a sleep consultant  
And by that, I mean a hammock.  
I love taking photos of my family  
That look more like national geographic.

I'm a financial planner, a shift worker  
An impressionist, an assistant  
An inspector and a detector  
No day is ever consistent.

I'm also quite the tour guide  
And pretty good I'm told  
I know I only have two arms  
But you should see how much I can hold.

My weakness is I guess  
I feel everything 10 x more  
Since becoming someone's home  
I'm somewhat different than before.

My last salary for all this work?  
No, I didn't charge a fee  
It's the greatest 'job' I ever had  
I'd do it all again for free.



# Finding Me with You

Becoming a mother to a child with a highly sensitive nature has been the best thing that's ever happened to me, but also an undoing.

Some days I've felt such loss of self-identity. I've drawn on strength for him that I don't have to lend, but I've scraped the barrel leaving scratches.

He was upset after his nap today. I didn't know what it was about, he couldn't tell me through his kicking and screaming and many tears.

I tried to reach out for him and he moved my hand away. "NO" he screamed.

Usually I would take this as a sign to leave.

But I sat beside him.

I kept trying to talk to him and ask him what I could do, he continued to cry and put his head in his hands.

I was silent for a while.

I continued to sit beside him.

I asked if he wanted a hug, he said "NO", slightly calmer now.

I felt distressed, sitting there, wanting to give him space but trying to bridge the gap at the same time.

Slowly, he came over to me and fell into my arms after what felt like forever.

We battle with moments like this often, loud noises, unpredictable situations, change in routine. But I want him to know he is greater than what he feels.

Having a child who is highly sensitive can be an emotional roller coaster, despite their beautiful nature it can be

draining.

But what I've realised is, there are many mirrors being held up to me through mothering him.

Because to be there for him, to really be there, I have to sit beside myself and confront some of the things that trigger me too.

These testing moments have taught me it's not about searching down the old roads I once travelled to find me again.

It's travelling down these new ones next to his young heart, discovering the me I want to be for him while he simultaneously finds himself.

# Daddy Daughter

You're her Daddy.  
Not the scary type though  
She will know she can come to you because you don't rule  
with an iron fist.  
You rule with kindness and empathy.  
You're her safe place.  
I'll never be able to say  
"Wait till I tell your father"  
And that makes me happy.  
One day she will be dating and I know you joke about  
saying things to guys like, "I'll do to you whatever you do  
to her". But you'll extend your hand instead, and stay up  
watching your phone.  
You tie her hair up (awkwardly).  
You dress her dolls with her.  
You call me from a store if you see a toy pony you think  
she might like.  
You do monkey impressions or make silly noises, anything  
to hear her giggle.  
You cuddle and sing her to sleep.  
You sometimes get her dressed in the mornings and pick  
out her clothes (even if you do put tights on her as pants).  
Sometimes when she wakes I can smell your faint cologne  
on her neck.  
She will remember that smell.  
When I say "Daddy's home" the whole house's heart  
starts to swell, and I may be frazzled and exhausted but  
when I see her look at you with that smile, I smile too and  
the hard day starts to fade away.

You tell her you're the lucky one, she knows she is too.

# Carrying you

I carried you.  
In a heartbeat you were one too.  
The beat of mine,  
The first song I sung to you.  
Through pain and a force like no other I carried you into  
this world.  
My skin and smell, your first intuition.  
Breathing beside you, as you breathed life into me.  
With tired bones and heavy eyes,  
I carried you.  
With my sore body and full heart,  
I carried you.  
With an aching love,  
Our hearts whispering to each other as you fell asleep.  
Though I will cry, and you will too.  
We'll continue to sail along,  
Lead by you.  
With this, I promise,  
to always carry you.  
*What a privilege to be loved like this.*  
The sleep will come.  
The shore will come.  
So I understand if you want to be here.  
With one breath at a time.  
I will carry you.  
For as long as you need.  
Because you carry me too.

# Two

Not long ago you brought with you the sun.  
You changed my world,  
I became a Mum.

I've known love,  
That much is true,  
But not like this  
Not like you.

I'll celebrate your milestones  
And with this I will try,  
To stay present through knowing,  
There are so many last times.

Your little clothes  
Get packed away.  
Baby words more polished  
With each new day.

You'll never be this small,  
So I'll treasure this time.  
One day when we cuddle,  
Your head will rest on mine.

All those nights  
I sigh by your bed,  
Patting your back,  
Stroking your head.

One day I'll miss this  
As I peek through your door.  
You'll drift off without me

My safe touch not needed anymore.

Those bright eyes of yours  
That mobilize your soul  
Will change through the years  
Carrying weights as you grow

But when I look into them  
I'll always see  
That little boy  
Who loves his Mummy.

Some days it feels like motherhood just takes,  
But my heart I have handed to you  
And I'll hold yours forever,  
Even when it breaks.

But right now in this moment  
You're deliciously young  
Full of child's play, questions  
Cuddles and fun.

No matter what, there's one constant,  
Each season I have you.  
Happy Birthday my darling,  
Today you turn two.

# Marriage

Having a baby won't "fix" your relationship. Oh no. It will test it, in every way shape and form.

Spend the time together first, have the long-winded conversations, have the sleep ins, have the nights out now, have the intimacy, have the uninterrupted meals.

You can't bank them. That's true.

But you need them now more than ever.

You need them so you can remember them when your eyeballs are hanging out of your head at 3:00am while you're looking at your partner and his worthless nipples.

You need them so when you lash out in frustration you can apologise later, and he knows you truly mean it.

You need them to really appreciate the sacrifice each of you make, whether it be staying home or working, it's exhausting and it's actually hilarious that you thought you were busy before kids.

You need them because sometimes when you don't recognise each other under the masks of fatigue and clothes on day three, you can at least recognise the full worth of each other.

You need them because the first few months, even years can be the hardest on your relationship.

Evenings on the couch barely speaking to each other thinking every noise is the baby waking.

Date nights going weeks, months in between, if at all.

Conversations that used to be about nothing that would evolve into everything, now kept to the point because there's just no time.

Scrolling through phones to fall asleep and forgetting to say goodnight.

No, having a baby won't fix your relationship, but it will make what you already have a damn sight stronger, if you have the patience to let it.

Remember who you were, so you can appreciate how far you've come, as friends, as lovers, as parents, as a team.

Remember you'll get it back again, possibly dusty from being in storage, but it will be there, waiting.

You can't start this journey broken, start it whole, so if you break, you can build each other back up.



# Stay with Me

I don't think I want to let you cry tonight  
When I see it like this I understand  
Home is where the heart is and your heart is homesick.

I know I'll get told you have to learn,  
That I'm being too easy on you,  
That I'm making a rod for my own back  
But you're so small, you will learn in time.

So I won't let you cry alone  
I'll let you lie here with me, a little longer  
I'll let you feed here a moment more  
I'll breathe you in.

Just like the phantom flutters on my fingertips when I  
touch my belly, this too will be a distant memory.

So let's dry those tears, you can stay with me here a  
moment more.

# Mothers Skin

We may not love the skin we're in postpartum.  
But they do.  
We may see the scars and stripes of repair.  
But they don't.  
We hang onto the looseness, cry over the leakage and  
break ourselves over what we 'should be'.  
But they know of no comparison, only the you of  
yesterday and the you of today.

This magic skin grew them from within.  
It encased the body that nourished them for all those  
months, the heart that physically grew bigger to  
accommodate the increased blood volume.

It stretched with them and broke and healed.  
It was the first skin they knew, the one that smelt of  
contentment in their first introduction to the scary  
outside world.

This skin will continue to be that comfort throughout life,  
in so many ways.

It's ok to not love it completely and miss the body we had  
before.  
It's ok to not see ourselves through their eyes.  
But if we want them to love the skin they're in, we need  
to find peace in our own.

Embrace this new kind of beauty.  
The real kind.  
The one we need to talk about more.

# That First Smile

They didn't tell me  
About that first time  
How after that moment  
Our worlds would align

They spoke of the birth  
The moment we'd meet  
Breathing you in  
Being brought to my knees

Hovering in your door way  
Staring into your eyes  
Willing you to tell me  
What you only could in cries

I was fearful of those mornings  
As everyone would leave  
The room became smaller  
It was harder to breathe

Pinching myself  
because I had a new meaning  
Pinching myself  
Through the tears of feeding

Burp cloths and pumps  
And nappy decor  
Sprawled out with the pieces of  
Me on the floor

Just like magic  
This gift I was handed  
The timing was perfect  
Like nature had planned it

They told me it would come  
That it may take a while  
But never how I'd feel  
When I saw that first smile

Motherhood in an instant  
Became mine for the taking  
Suddenly every last moment  
Was history in the making.

I was your reason  
And you were mine  
The moment our worlds  
Stood still in time.

# He Wasn't Breastfed

My little boy needs his Mummy to get to sleep.

He wasn't breastfed.

When something upsets him, he only wants Mummy cuddles.

He wasn't breastfed.

My little boy loves to hold my hand.

He wasn't breastfed.

My little boy and I have such a beautiful bond.

He wasn't breastfed.

My little boy is thriving.

He wasn't breastfed.

My little boy is incredibly affectionate.

He wasn't breastfed.

I would bend over backwards and do anything for him.  
But I couldn't breastfeed him.

I was physically and mentally cracked open into a wound

and the anxiety and agony I felt before each feed was crippling.

So, I made the hardest yet best decision to stop trying, even though I tried through toe curling latches and pumping pink milk until my tears ran dry.

It just wasn't meant to be.

But I'm no less of a mother in his eyes,  
Or in mine now.  
Because I show up every day for him and love him entirely. This is what it means to be a mother, not if you're able to breastfeed.

Just because some will succeed, it doesn't mean you've failed.

Resilience, determination and sacrifice aren't traits of failure.

My little man wasn't breastfed, but he still blooms, I'm simply blinded by it,  
and he loves his Mummy so much.

# One Tired Mama

I'm exhausted I won't lie. Two and a half years on and we're still up most nights, not all... but most. The two of them usually wake each other up and off we go, yoyo's between rooms. Never really looking forward to sleep anymore, patting backs, cuddling, musical beds, sleeping on the floor, texting each other trying to troubleshoot, even though we know 9 times out of 10 they just want a hug.

I was told to make heaps of noise when they sleep so they'd get used to it. We tried... it didn't work. They just woke every time. Then they woke each other. So white noise and toilet paper in the loo before I wee it is.

I've been told to let them cry. I personally can't do that, I've had moments of sheer exhaustion with my back to the door counting to 20 listening to them cry while I take a breath, but I couldn't sleep through that, it would just be painful for both of us so we chose not to go down that route.

I've been told not to feed to sleep to avoid bad habits. But I used boob as a great way to get Holly to sleep for months and I ignored all those opinions swirling round in my head. As soon as we stopped feeding she didn't need it anyway.

I've been told "ohhh look at her manipulating you, she knows what she's doing!"

If we don't give them reassurance and a cuddle in the night because we want them to sleep through then who's manipulating who?

I remind myself as she's cuddling me in the small hours of the night that this won't be forever, we will sleep again! Even if right now it's hard to imagine. That one day, I might miss this.

We're tired and it's hard, but we do what we need to in the middle of the night, and it just so happens it's what they need too.



# What Did You Do All Day?

Me: “Right kids, what are we going to do today?”

I make breakfast.

I clean up the remnants from breakfast.

I change nappies, brush teeth, wash faces.

I stuff snacks into the pram and go on a walk with the dog.

I time it so Holly has her nap on the walk, she doesn't.

We get home and Harry's nappy needs changing, again.

I put TV on for a short while.

Feels guilty for the TV being on.

I finally get her down.

Harry goes to play outside.

I do some dishes.

I pick up some toys.

I put on a load of washing.

Bins are overflowing, I take them out.

I forgot the poop scoop and Harry's been outside.

Great.

Holly's awake, I get her up and get her outside too.

Lunch time soon...

We come inside.

I start to write the shopping list, they're fighting, I stop writing the shopping list.

I prepare their lunch.

They eat.

We play some more, while my minds on the food all over the floor and dishes everywhere.

Washing machine beeps at me.

I hang out washing and bring them back out so I can

watch them.

Mental note to buy them more clothes as they're growing out of them, and fast.

Thinks about money... maybe I should find some part time work?

Gets out sensory activities.

Regrets getting out sensory activities.

Spends a long time cleaning up after said sensory activities.

Lunch nap time.

Nappy changes.

Battles to get them down.

Wins.... eventually.

Cleans quickly.

Does a couple of small chores.

Scrolls through Facebook.

Oooo that article on what to feed your toddler is interesting, do I give them enough veggies?

I stuff my face, they wake.

The house is still a mess somehow.

Snacks.

Milk.

Comforting.

Playing.

Teaching.

Nappy changes.

Leaving the housework, again.

Starts to feel guilty because of it.

Starts to feel guilty because we don't get out enough.

Feels overwhelmed with the planning of just getting out.

Takes them out.

Snacks.

Watches it drip and fall into the pram.

Mental note, clean that later.

They're tired, they're over it.  
Feels overwhelmed by being out.  
Wrestles them into car seats.  
Gets home, change of clothes because Harry wet through his.  
Unpacks and repacks nappy bag.  
Starts stripping the sheets, when did I last do that?  
Calls out to the kids when it goes silent, "Where are you, what are you doing"?  
Sits down and reads them a book.

Feels guilty that I rushed through it.  
Even though no one was interested.  
Prepares their dinner.  
Realises I never showered today.  
Realises there's toy cars and colourful plastic eye sores throughout the whole house that I haven't tidied up.  
Starts thinking about the night routine.

Husband gets home from work: "What did you guys get up to today?"

Me: \*sighs\* "Nothing much, I never seem to get anything done around here".

# Baby Blues

I sit on the hospital bed as a new mother, which I became  
in mere seconds, to a perfectly healthy baby.  
The river running down my face must mean I'm  
ungrateful.

“Mama, wipe away those tears”

The congratulatory messages flood in,  
“You must be overwhelmed with happiness”, “enjoy every  
minute”.

It's not their fault, I've said it too, it's what we say to new  
Mothers isn't it?

“Mama, wipe away those tears”

Look at what I have! I don't deserve to feel sad, let's  
throw that emotion in the corner, with the postpartum  
underwear.

Nothing to see here.

“Mama, wipe away those tears”

Why do I feel like a prisoner?

Why are these four walls closing in?

You have a roof over your head, you have a lovely home.

Some people live on the street!

“Mama, wipe away those tears”

My body feels different, it looks different.

But many women would kill for your silvery stripes, the  
lines of motherhood, look at what it gave you!

“Mama, wipe away those tears”

I have a husband who steps up, he is the definition of the  
word father. I know some women struggle without

support.

See? You have it so good!

“Mama, wipe away those tears”

I don't know this new me, I haven't met her before, I'm doubting her a lot.

But you're alive, you're breathing, be thankful!

“Mama, wipe away those tears”

I can't feel sad, there's no room for my sadness with all that's going on.

My heart is full, but I'm running on empty and I'm overwhelmed.

My body has broken and the pain is still in my bones.

My life has changed direction in an instant and I just need to feel it all for a moment and cry without judgement, without question.

I stand here in the shower touching my spongy belly and I'm alone in here for the first time in 9 months, the sprays of water drown away my tears.

I know you compare others misfortunes against my nonexistent ones in the attempt to dam this river.

But my sadness belongs to me, it doesn't need to be measured.

I may not understand it either.

But please let me cry these tears

So I can feel lighter again.

So I can be the Mother I am destined to be.

Without this shade of blue.

Because I am lucky

I'm strong,

WE, are unbelievably strong.

# Love at First Sight

We sat there waiting  
Anticipating  
Holding hands  
Making plans

Decorating  
Visualizing  
Making a nest  
Being told by everyone,  
I need to rest  
And then it began  
We're holding hands  
Again, but this time in pain

I feel crippled, yet strong  
You're placed in my trembling arms  
Where you belong

I am awakened  
Like never before  
Cracked open with wounds  
Exposed and raw

My eyes are twinkling  
Blinking, leaking.  
As they trace your face  
Taking in every little bit  
I don't know what to say  
So I whisper, "I did it".

Here comes the rush of love  
As I come apart

That one people talk about  
A work of art.

Listening to your little noises  
The tiny squawks  
The little yawns  
Wondering how I could possibly  
ever be without them,  
How I was before.

Though we will sit in shadows  
We will come out the other side.  
I'll always show up for you  
Even when I want to run and hide.

This journey will be a game of peek a boo,  
I tell you.  
Together we will find each other  
One day at a time.

The room is quiet now  
Husband snoring away in the chair  
It's like it's only you and I here  
I kiss your forehead  
And we fall asleep.

# Pieces of Me

Sometimes I think I'm an introvert, often I get those anxious waves. But I'm constantly told by others I'm an extrovert, at least I used to be.

Sometimes I still feel like I have my youth. But these last two years have aged me, my mind is still with my younger body.

I used to think I was organised and clean, but now I forget the day of the week and my cleaning efforts are wiping the sink with my hands while I wash them after nappy changes.

I used to be a motivated energetic person. Now everything's a bit foggy. I can't remember the last time I had pure energy that wasn't handed to me in a steaming mug.

I think I'm a sensitive person, but I also swear like a sailor. I'm in touch with my feelings, but I sometimes suppress them too.

Some days I win at the gentle parenting gig, others I'm 'yelly Mum'. I always hope they remember the cuddles more than the yelling.

Some days I'm really observant, I'll spot a stain on the carpet a mile away, but others I can't remember little milestones as they pass the baton between phases so quickly.



Sometimes when someone asks me what I do, I say, “I’m JUST a stay at home mum”. I know I’m climbing mountains over here, but I’m still dreaming even bigger. Sometimes I feel admitting that makes me ungrateful.

Sometimes it bothers me that people may not like me. I worry about it.

Other days I think argh who bloody cares, I’m not changing who I am or making myself smaller for someone else.

I’ve always been pretty positive, but I also feel quite negative at times. When I wake up with no set plans for the day I feel the rain clouds drifting closer.

Some days I put on some makeup, my husband will tell me I look great, and I love hearing it. But part of me is still withdrawn. I still feel like I belong so much to the kids and I’m struggling to find the me in “mum”.

Some days I feel complete, others completely alone.

Some days I ache, the kind within. It’s this new love I’m feeling. The kind so big it hurts.

It’s a no wonder we say postpartum pulls you apart and rearranges you. I’m still being rearranged, every day. Maybe I’ll never fit into a little box. Maybe being a little all over the place is fine. Maybe that’s the whole point.

# Welcome to Motherhood

When I entered motherhood  
I walked through a little door  
This is Motherhood it read  
Everyone sat there in stripey tops  
Exchanging pleasantries  
Things scattered all over the floor  
Bags overflowing  
Nervous smiles  
Connected by motherhood  
Disconnected by unspoken truths  
Then someone said  
“I love being a Mum, but this is also really hard”  
Then suddenly I didn't feel alone anymore.

# Thanks For the Advice

“This is how you should do it”  
I’m no stranger to the advice  
But don’t condemn me for the choices I’ve made  
So that I look contrite

My eyes will bulge  
I’ll let the night take its toll  
Because hearing little cries alone  
Isn’t gentle on my soul

I’ll sit here in my robe  
As she hangs off the boob  
I’ll tell you nicely with a smile  
We’ll stop when she’s twenty two

I wonder some days  
Did you care to look  
At her,  
Instead of that textbook?

Boob or bottles  
Shushing or a gentle pat.  
I guess every baby’s different.  
Fancy that?

It’s hard to explain  
This constant attachment  
It’s exhausting some days, but manageable  
But if I could try, I guess I would say  
My bond with her won’t be intangible

I accept in motherhood  
There will be many noises  
In a brazen attempt to  
Validate their choices

To be independent  
That doesn't sound so crazy?  
Did we forget along the way  
That she's just a baby?

It's only a given  
These indifferent opinions.  
But I can't help but wonder  
Will it always be like this?  
Do they get to an age  
Where advice isn't so generously dished?

I know I'll make mistakes  
I know I have my flaws  
But I want to say I did my best  
Not that I did yours.

# Mum, I Understand Everything Now

There is so much I didn't understand back then, but now I do.

I never understood why sometimes you would look at me for the longest time.

Now I know, you were wanting time to stand still.

I never understood why you would say you just wanted 5 minutes of peace and quiet, when being loud and messy was much more fun.

I never understood why you would tell me to "always be kind", when my brother was so annoying!

Now I know, that nothing could make a mother more proud.

I never understood why sometimes you would sit with your head in your hands.

Now I understand, you were hiding your tears.

I never understood why I missed you for what felt like days.

Now I understand, you were working around the clock just to keep us afloat.

I never understood why you seemed upset that I didn't like my doll you got me one Christmas. After all, it wasn't the one I asked for.

Now I understand, it was the next best affordable option.

I never understood why we had a big house then one day it became much smaller.

Now I understand that even as a single mother, you put our needs for school zoning ahead of the comfort of a larger home.

I never understood why when I was hurt I only wanted you.

Now I do, you're the safest place I've ever known.

I never understood why in so many photos your dressy outfit was always the same.

Now I know, because ours were always different.

I never understood why you cried on my first overseas trip alone.

Now I know, the worry never stops.

I never understood why sometimes your hugs lasted that little bit longer.

Now I know, you needed one more than me.

I didn't understand so much back then, but now I do. You're my hero, I love you.

I understand everything now.

# My World

For I was your sun,  
the only warmth you needed before you saw  
a sunrise with your own eyes.

I was your star,  
before they dusted across your gaze with  
possibility and wonder.

I was your moon,  
your only pull, before you noticed the comforting  
light in the nights blanket.

I was your universe for such a short while,  
until you saw there was so much more.

But I will always be the earth,  
your roots grew here.

And you will always be my world.

# The Battle

Some days just feel like a battle.  
With them.  
With yourself.  
With your partner.  
With your dressing gown getting caught on the door  
handle, and then it's all over.  
The last straw and the tears spill.  
And it feels good for a moment.  
Then the battle starts again.

They're screaming at you and you're trying to remain  
calm, they're spitting out food and you're trying not to be  
offended and look at all the mess. They're having a  
tantrum while you're trying to offer them a hug even  
though you don't feel like giving them one.  
Sometimes in those weak moments you imagine throwing  
your hands up saying, "I'm done". But never would.

The battle with the early days of motherhood all being so  
beautiful, then boring and then beautiful, then routine,  
and then utterly beautiful again.

The battle between complete gratitude for what you have  
and complete loss over who you left behind.

The battle with sleep.

The fantasising over it so much that when nighttime rolls  
around you realise how excited you are, but also nervous  
for what the night may bring.

Some days I imagine having an uninterrupted thought.  
Or a full meal.



Or some time to myself, even just to start something and finish it.

My new goal.

Finish something.

The battle of no breaks.

Of just wanting a little time alone to recharge from all the giving.

And oh how we love them, totally and completely.

So then comes the guilt for feeling all of these things.

We're human too, we make mistakes.

Some of us may even be trying to change the ones that we grew up with.

Sometimes we need that hug just as much as they do.

The big kid in our hearts.

But we find it so hard to ask for it.

Sometimes that's the biggest battle of all.

# I Love You All the Same

It doesn't matter who came first or second.  
Love isn't measured this way.

It doesn't matter who sleeps through the night,  
I still find myself scrolling through photos of you both  
when I should be sleeping.

It doesn't matter if you take it all in your stride or if you  
clutch onto my leg, my heart is with you both no matter  
how you walk through life's journey.

It doesn't matter if you smother me with kisses or prefer  
your own space, I breathe you both in when those hugs do  
come all the same.

It doesn't matter if you yell at the top of your lungs or  
whisper softly in my ear.  
I hear you.

It doesn't matter if you do cartwheels across the room or  
sit quietly playing alone, please know that I see you,  
always.

It doesn't matter how you were fed, breast or bottle, you  
both look at me like I'm your entire world.

It doesn't matter your age or stage, it's all so new,  
deliciously different as each of you are.

It doesn't matter who did what first, there's no race, life's  
pages are turning quickly and all I want to do is bookmark

this for a little while.

It doesn't matter if my arms are full, though my back has seen better days.

It doesn't matter who had more time before the other arrived, truth is I can't remember a time where you weren't mine.

It doesn't matter who came first or second.

There is no more or no less.

Just my first unconditional loves the second my life truly began.

# Here's to Us

Here's to us.

I remember us, young, carefree us.  
Plans were only made for travel, and 'routine' was as good as the empty pages of our calendar.

Sheets would lie lazily around us on Sunday mornings and new cafe ventures would await.  
Now the sheets are cold at 4am but the floor next to the cots are warm.

The touch of each other's hands have been replaced by soft beautifully grubby little ones.  
Our excitement used to lie in the discoveries about each other, now they're with each little new word or babble, each new curl.

We sigh a lot, usually as a response to a question, "How was your day?", "Sigh".  
When I throw my arms around you it's to lean on you, and you know that, and that's OK.

We brush past each other like drifting clouds through the night time routine.

We forget to say I love you out-loud sometimes, but we have a language that we've developed in support instead, the "I love you's" are still there.

Our days were mapped by arbitrary decisions, currently they're dictated by leaps, phases, and regressions, I know we didn't want to be "those parents", but here we are.

We're completely and vulnerably honest with each other, not just in words but in our deepest emotions and letting them float to the surface.

We've seen a lot, you've seen a lot of me.

At my worst, I've said things I'm not proud of in the heat of the moment and I'm sorry.

I want to thank you though, for everything.

For seeing through the unfamiliarity and knowing I'm still there, but loving the new me even more, and loving what we've created more than life itself.

We discover so much when we first become parents and we forget that our relationship is a new discovery too.

Us has a new meaning now, it's us and them.

Encompassing and evolving and I love you for supporting and loving me through it all.

Here's to us.

# My Sensitive Child

I planted a seed once and watched it grow.  
It fought the breeze like a tornado,  
felt the gentle rain like a storm,  
and heard the leaves whisper like thunderbolts.  
Butterfly wings would knock you down inside.  
I watched others grow around you, not feeling the force of  
it all quite like you.  
One day you will no longer swim against the tide.  
You will ride the waves and the tears will be mine.  
Because your nature is beautiful.  
Because you are strong.  
I will help you see that the earth can be moved by you  
instead.  
As you move me.  
My sensitive child.

# Take the Picture

As I scroll through friends' photos online.

I see so many of their beautiful babies, or the fathers holding them.

Not many mothers in sight, the quiet achievers, capturing moments.

There's tired magic behind those phones and cameras.

Warm smiling eyes as you take the picture.

Happy smiles back, just at the sight of you.

Just look at what you made.

So get in the photo, or ask for one.

Whatever you look like.

Because you created a kingdom.

And you deserve to be seen in it.

Those happy smiles will be smiling at you in that photo.

For years to come.

# I Will Always Need You

When I lie in bed at night I wonder if I ask too much of you.

Do I deserve your forgiveness on those harder days?

Did I deserve your small hand to reach up and wipe away the tears I tried to smile through?

Did I ask you to grow up too fast when my core was divided but you still needed me in yours?

I see your small face every night as I close my eyes.  
But I'm learning to be gentle with myself.

How can I possibly make you understand that you've been the only teacher that's awakened me?

The universe and all its wonders have nothing on you.

When I hold you close and you hold me back,

I grow in every space that was empty before you.

My weary soul becomes beautiful once more.

You may never understand how much I love you.

One day you will learn this truth,

I will always need you,

more than you will need me.



# Finding Us

I would often hear how much closer you'd become in your relationship after having children.

I'd see the fabricated newborn photos behind smiles and perfect lighting, engorged breasts and awkward poses.

I know, because I have them.

But it's the part in between you becoming closer that isn't talked about much.

The confusing part.

Where the love of the child you've created fuses you together but can also be the very thing that holds you at arm's length.

Where all of a sudden your love for each other inexplicably takes a turn for a greater more powerful love that you've never felt before and you accept it, before really being able to process it.

Where you look at each other over the piles of laundry, breast pumps, dishes, nappies, ointments and the distance between you feels like an obstacle course of cumbersome chores and challenges.

Where your hands slide past each other's to hold onto smaller ones.

Where you're told to nurture your relationship, but not how to, when in reality the only place for it right now comes last.

Where we have made ourselves smaller in this new picture, stripped down in its unfiltered format.

We don't talk about that part.

The raw and exposed part that grounds you to the core but also holds you in a state of shock.

Just constant, and no need to align that word to anything.

Because that's what it is.

Constant.

I asked myself, what now?

It wasn't the deep and meaningful chat I thought we needed. Because this journey we're on, is that, every day, even without words.

Instead it was the on the surface stuff, the new pieces we were picking out and rearranging around each other. The favourite movie chat, the bad jokes, the light behind the tired eyes that comes with new found discovery.

The fun light hearted stuff.

It was going from living and breathing each other in our most non sheltered state, to putting on some makeup, nice but old clothes, and sitting across from one another at a restaurant and making the effort to know each other again.

The small things, the things that still matter.

It's a new introduction.

No one talks about that.

# Hello Old Friend

Today I saw an old friend from my past  
She barely stopped, she was moving so fast

Hurrying and shushing  
And looking quite flushed  
The frazzled kind  
Not contoured with blush

I had to double take  
Her brows in a frown  
Her clothes mis-matched  
Her hair in a crown

She carried herself differently  
Tired and raw  
But a beauty that shined  
More visibly than before

It wasn't the kind that we're used to seeing.  
It's the kind that radiates from your every being

She swayed side to side  
A baby on her hip  
As she stared in the distance,  
Chewing her lip

I decided to approach and reconnect with this girl  
To remind her that she was conquering the world

She told me her life had completely changed  
That the pieces of her had been rearranged

Pieces left for months on the floor  
So it took her a while to feel whole once more

Then she said, “I get it now”,  
“This is who I’m meant to be”  
And I actually believed her  
As she stared back at me

She was tired yet knowing  
A world of content  
In a place so new  
For where she was meant

I took a deep breath as I left our embrace  
From the girl in the mirror  
With a smile on my face.

# Today I ...

Today I climbed a mountain.  
I finished a novel.  
I gained my certificate in first aid.  
I took a course in cuisine cooking.  
I went to the gym.  
I meditated.

In reality I...

Got the kids out of the house.  
Read them a couple of books.  
Kissed a sore knee better.  
Got their sandwiches and fruit ready for lunch.  
Got them both down for a nap.  
Then reheated my coffee and had a few minutes of peace.

And that's kind of the same thing.

# Well Done You

Here's the thing,

If you breastfed your baby, that's amazing, it's a big commitment and no easy task, it's also a beautiful way to bond.

Well done you.

If you bottle fed your baby, how beautiful that Dad also gets to feed baby. It can be time consuming. It's also a beautiful way to bond.

Well done you.

If you took a long time off for maternity leave, that's really selfless to leave your career to stay at home with your baby, it's one heck of a job and they're lucky to have you home with them.

Well done you.

If you went back to your job earlier than planned because you had to or wanted to. That's tough on you when they're so young but good on you for getting on with it and earning enough to give them the things they need, much respect.

Well done you.

If you're a single mum, you're honestly superwoman, your child will admire you and even though you may not feel strong you are incredible.

Well done you.

If you're in a relationship, it's not easy nurturing a relationship when you have a new baby, getting through those hard early days are tough, but if you come out the other side stronger than ever,

Well done you.

You had your kids close together, that must have been hard on your body and tough to balance the two so young.

Well done you.

You have a big age gap between your kids, well done for getting to spend as much time as possible with your firstborn and prioritise some other things in your life first.

Well done you.

You make all their food from scratch, lucky kids.

Well done you.

You buy their food from the supermarket, lucky kids.

Well done you.

There's more than one way to raise a baby and we're all doing the best we can.

If you do it with love, then well done you.

# Until We Meet Again

I remember when we met, in the dark, and I miss you.  
One day I'll have you in one piece, all of you to myself.  
Sometimes we argue over who gets you first.  
I think about you all the time.  
I feel like I don't know me without you.  
You build me up, you make me the best version of myself.  
I'm going a little crazy without you.  
I lose my patience without you.  
I can't see straight without you.  
We've had our ups and downs and I feel that we've lost touch.  
You're not making time for me.  
Or maybe I'm not making time for you.  
I see you with others, they're getting the best of you.  
And it makes me jealous.  
When I'm with you, I'm in another world, anything can happen, but I'm always being pulled away from you.  
You're popular, so we fight over you.  
Sometimes I wonder if it's worth all the trouble.  
But then we meet again and I know it is.  
We're at different stages of our lives, our relationship's not as deep as it once was.  
Right now, it's just not meant to be.

Sleep, I miss you.

But I have someone more important in my life.  
Let's remember the good times.  
Until we meet again.



# Here's the Truth

One day my sweet baby, I will look you in the eye and tell you the honest truth.

I'll let you in on a little secret.

Want to know?

I had absolutely no idea what I was doing.

That's right, none.

I had you, a baby, A BABY, a massive responsibility, you completely trusted me, and I didn't have a clue.

I was scared to leave the hospital because I felt you were in better care with the nurses and midwives.

In our first week together, I looked down at you while changing your nappy and I swear your furrowed brow expression said, "What ARE you doing woman".

I whispered to you with tears in my eyes "I'm so sorry, bear with me, I'm new to this".

When you were in my swollen belly I went to classes, I read all the books, I even watched birthing videos, sometimes back-to-back (please don't do this).

But nothing prepares you for this and people will tell you that, but you'll think it's cliché as you hear it so often.

But it's true, and one day I'll tell you this too.

But I'll also tell you this.

Let your sweet baby teach you as much as possible.

The truth is, you helped me to trust myself, to be confident, to love beyond measure, be vulnerable, to defend without question, to ache and heal all at once.

You taught me to be strong, I knew better than anyone  
after all, because you guided me along the way.

So I'll tell you,  
If you're afraid of the unknown of parenthood, remember  
to let yourself be shown.  
By someone much younger than you.  
Someone you haven't met yet.  
Just as you showed me.

# Dear Second Child

My second child,

You may have come in that order, but you aren't second rate.

The only second you are to me is my second language. The one I had to learn because you were so different to my first.

My second wind, when things get too much, and some days they do, you give me the grace to be patient with myself.

My second nature, yes, you're your own little person, but things were a little easier this time round. I rested into it without the resistance of a first time Mum.

My second skin, I treasure our cuddles under a blanket where I can breathe you in like an old book.

I'll admit, I wasn't up every second checking if you were breathing in your cot, I could feel it in my hearts rhythm while I slept.

I didn't check my app quite as often as to whether you were the size of a lime or an avocado, and your scrap book hasn't come together yet... in fact it's still a thought in my mind.

Yes, your clothes might be second hand and the milestone photos aren't as planned out, sometimes they're a few days late.

You hear me yell more than I'd like to admit, you didn't arrive into peace and quiet, my soft sing song voice is

usually interrupted by a crash somewhere and then more yelling.

I hear myself often saying “Hold on a second”, “Wait a second”. But this doesn’t mean you come second. Please don’t give that a second thought.

I may not be able to give you everything you want, but I will always try to give you everything you need, please never second guess that.

Know in your little core, how special you are to me.

Yes, you are my second child, not the second half of my heart, but the other half.

You didn’t make me a Mama, but you’ve made me the Mama I am proud to be.

I’d move mountains for you in seconds.

And my second child, my love for you is second to none.

# Stay at Home Mum

The house is a mess  
My clothes are old  
The chores are endless  
As the day unfolds  
Guilt is a feeling  
I've grown to know  
It follows me daily  
Like a dismal shadow  
Aches and pains  
And all the strains  
Bending and lifting  
And playing games  
Stay at home mum  
Won't that be fun  
Finger painting and Netflix  
And one on one  
"No more work for you", they'd say  
"Free to relax and play all day"  
Naive is a word  
Not a strong enough fit  
To describe this exhaustion  
That fills every bit  
My back is sore  
My hands are dry  
My lunch will be crusts  
My outlet, a cry  
I'm working on forgiveness  
I'm working on myself  
I'm trying to locate her  
High up on a shelf  
I'm in the best company  
But still I feel lonely  
These windows grew bars  
For somewhere so homely

I'm juggling many balls  
But that's not the worst  
Ones about to drop  
Which one will fall first  
I hate asking for help  
Don't you see, I can do this  
But I need it some days  
When it all feels so useless  
Resentment and woes  
The highs and the lows  
Unconditional love  
And that's how it goes  
Feelings drifting  
So hard to pin down  
Some days you win  
Others you drown  
Yes I am lucky  
I love them to bits  
And I'd do it again  
Every day for these kids  
They've helped me slow down  
They've taught me to say "No"  
They're teaching me daily  
About how I can grow.  
I'm better because of them  
I'll continue to be  
A love like no other  
As they are for me  
We're stay at home Mums  
We're bloody strong  
So we keep on  
Keeping on.

# Growing Up

This year it's my hand you hold.  
It's my arms you fall into.  
It's my neck that catches the fall of your tears.

I'm the one you look to when you're proud of something,  
or when you seek comfort.

I'm the one who can change your mood by singing a song  
or knowing how to make you giggle.

I'm the keeper of your achievements and vulnerabilities.  
I'm the open book that has pages waiting to be filled with  
our adventures.

As we fill them up together, you'll be growing.

Year by year.

The chapter of just us will suddenly come to an end.

Before I know it, someone else's hand will take my place  
and you'll be looking back at me waving goodbye.

Your new safe place will be them, and I'll love them too  
for that very reason.

I'll be proud of how you treat them, knowing you were  
always shown love here.

You may leave this home with an empty room but with a  
heart that could never be so full.

All of a sudden, your big hands will steady mine instead.  
And when they do, I'll always remember that little hand of  
yours, the one that reached out for mine, and fit so  
perfectly.

# Motherhood for Me...

Motherhood for me has been... Routine.

Forgetting why I walked into rooms.

Plastic shiny eye sores all around the house.

A constant headache from wearing my hair up.

Forgiving myself, time and time again.

Food wastage, a lot of it.

Trying to remember to make time for the animals.

Calling my pets, “the animals”.

Forgetting what my table looks like underneath washing piles.

Nodding in agreement when someone says “cheers to the freaken weekend”, but actually that means nothing to me.

When shaving my legs becomes an achievement of, ‘what I got done today’.

Routine.

Saving on shampoo and conditioner but spending up on dry shampoo.

Constantly seeing my iPhone storage is full from baby spam.

Online shopping.

Bay- Bee Shark do doo do do... (I know you sung that in your head).

Developing a new walk when the baby has just fallen asleep, I like to call it ‘the ninja’.

Laughing about nothing, crying about nothing.

Accepting that basic hygiene, like having a shower is considered “me time”.

Struggling to make conversation with hubby about anything not kid related.

Not thinking about my outfit anymore because... leggings.

Discovering new friendships, ones I know I’ll have for life.



Struggling to find balance.  
Fantasising about sleep yet trying to get my babies to  
sleep who don't want to sleep.  
Coming to terms with expectation verse reality.  
Feeling like a human jungle gym.  
Routine.  
Coffee, strong cold coffee.  
Thinking about child friendly cafes as opposed to bars.  
Not recognising my face under my eyebrow overtake.  
'To do' lists that only get longer.  
Messages left on read for hours, sometimes days at a time.  
Remembering not to compare and trusting in my instincts  
as a new mother.  
Broken conversations, or ones crammed into 30 seconds.  
Loving, so much it hurts.  
Guilt, over anything.  
Questions, so many questions, a lot about texture of poo.  
Routine, did I mention?  
But embracing it all, sometimes not with open arms, but  
embracing it.  
Through beauty and chaos.

What did I miss?

# Me, Before You

Sometimes I think about packing a small bag, booking a ticket somewhere with dusty cobblestones.

To covet those unfamiliar sights.

Where everything smells different and my face is a healthy flush.

I think about plush robes in hotels, beds I don't have to make, food I can order at the push of a button. A whole night's sleep.

I think about nights out where I can say, "why not" to another wine, stumbling in late laughing, unaware of the time, or how I'll feel in the morning.

To have the freedom of saying "bye" to a job I don't like without any thought, or "yes" to an amazing opportunity working overseas, not that that's ever happened anyway. Part of me still wishes I didn't know what was going to happen tomorrow, and I guess truthfully, I don't.

I think about a few hours of silence, sitting on a beach totally alone without my phone, without anything. I guess I could do this now, but I probably won't.

I think about being more practical, but I miss being a little reckless. Like maybe I'll just buy that crazy expensive dress, or maybe I'll go sky diving tomorrow, even though truth be told I've always been a bit skint, and I'd have to be pushed out of that plane.

I just wonder what it would feel like to not worry so

much, even though now I have something I'm so deeply in love with which is worth the worry. It hurts worrying all the time. I guess it's meant to.

I want to stop killing time when really, I'm trying to savour it. But I keep living at a minimum of 10 minutes ahead of myself, what to pack to leave the house, when to start lunch, how to get them from the car to their cot while they're asleep, or do I just sit in the car instead?

It's dark in our chair, I'm cuddling my baby to sleep while I have these thoughts.

I know this emphatically, I am the most fulfilled right now. I love everything about my life in this moment.

There's no address better than them.

But I still think about these things, sometimes.

# Looking for Her

I've been looking for her a little bit lately, the old me.

I've been missing her, my husband, balance. The scales have been tipping for a long time.

I've either been out of my mind or inside it too much.

It still feels like we're in the thick of it, even though there's no newborn anymore.

Chat is usually about things like having showers at night to save time in the morning, kisses are rushed or missed, "goodbyes" are muffled through closed doors.

I'm then gathering up the things to leave the house with. I find myself sitting in the car with the kids in a disheveled state, unsure where we're going. I wonder how I look to others now, do I LOOK like a Mum?

I'm still confused, I know I need to eat better but if I'm ever alone in the car I find myself scoffing McDonalds at the lights like an animal.

I'm confused how some days I can feel like a lioness, and others a chameleon, still trying to "fit in".

I'm confused why people tell me to enjoy every moment. I'm certain I'm growing more through the ones I've enjoyed the least.

I'm confused by when I talk about how hard self-discovery can be through motherhood, I always feel the need to tie

it up with a “but I wouldn’t trade it for anything”.  
Of course I wouldn’t. I don’t need to validate it, just leave  
it untied as the endless string of moments it’s meant to be.

I’m confused.

What do I even enjoy anymore?

This “Me” in Mum, this motherhood lined jacket that some  
days doesn’t warm up, and others fits just right.

I wonder if motherhood truly does strip you back, or is it  
just another layer entirely, so consuming that breaking it  
down to our core simply takes time?

What I do know though is it isn’t necessarily about going  
back to the “old you”, old jeans, old lifestyle, old body.

It’s about becoming.

Maybe I have to stop looking for “Her”, so that she can  
come and find me.

# You're So Lucky

You're so lucky,

As you kick and scream on the floor of the department store because I said “no”, to the toy you wanted. I think about how lucky you are.

You're lucky that you breathe in fresh air and can step outside into choices and freedom.

You're lucky of the support you have around you, in a world that will test you, my eyes will remain your mirror of truth.

You're lucky that your tummy is full and that you're nourished daily, even if it isn't always homemade.

You're lucky you have your health and on the days that you don't, medical help will be there within minutes.

You're lucky that the only absence you will feel will be from things you want and not things you truly need. You will feel absence of courage some days but with a gentle hand on your back reminding you of your strength.

You're lucky you have a roof over your head. I look at your small bedroom and dream of a bigger one for you one day, but it's decorated with the things you love, filled with pictures of planes and trains.

You're lucky that when you're hurt you will always have a place of comfort to heal, without question, without you having to try and be brave.

You're lucky that your authenticity will be appreciated and not bent or molded to conform to social norms.

You're lucky that you will always be protected, that even though I would throw myself in front of anything for you, chances are I won't have to.

You're lucky you're kept warm, as I pace the hallway while you toss and turn at night wondering if you're too hot or too cold.

You're lucky as you protest bed time, knowing the only monsters you will ever have to worry about are the ones under your bed. As I kiss you goodnight and watch you surrender into the safety of sleep, you know you will wake up into that same safety.

You're lucky that tomorrow will greet you with a tired but loving face, like it does every morning.

I can't explain this to you right now, all I can do is show you, every day.

Just how lucky you really are.

# Thank You

Thank you for standing by me  
Watching what I've gone through.  
I forget sometimes through teary eyes  
That you've had to go through it too.

The labor and the birth  
While that pain was mine.  
Your hand was never far away  
Your eyes never so wide.

My fear of being a new mother.  
The onset of baby blues.  
All the while you stayed strong for me  
While you were quietly fearful too.

The early days of breastfeeding.  
The trials and the tears.  
You were always helping with the latch  
While I was screaming in your ear.

See sometimes I forget,  
As hard as it was on me  
You had to watch me in this pain  
As you sat there helplessly.

Trying to remember things from antenatal  
Taking turns getting up in the night  
Feeling the fog of the fourth trimester  
In your own given right.



The daily battles I have at home  
Which you feel as you walk in the door  
But always with a smile and open arms  
Taking the weight off me once more.

You've seen me raw and at my limit.  
You've seen me vulnerable and small.  
All the while you've remained my rock  
And loved me through it all.

You don't sit on the sidelines  
Instead you sit by my side  
While we learn this all together  
On this beautiful but bumpy ride.

Even though you say sometimes  
You don't know what you can do.  
You've done it without even knowing  
For being their father and just being you.

# My Little Lady,

Don't hold it in, that roar of yours, it's fierce and it's brave. But if you want to be heard you must also listen.

Love with hunger as well as contentment. Love yourself enough so you can champion the achievements of those around you and the ones who paved the way before you. Love brings exquisite beauty and pain, only by embracing both will you feel love in its entirety.

Inhale life in giant gulps. I'll remind you of how you were never afraid to fall. Somewhere along the way I lost that, but you're teaching me this again, you're teaching me to fly.

Honour your home, this body you've been blessed with, take it on adventures, move it, be kind to it, accept it as it holds your hand through these chapters.

Don't disappear into shadows or make yourself smaller, keep speaking your truth. Sometimes this will intimidate others, maybe they're not ready to do the same yet. Stand alone if you must, though I'll be standing next to you, even when you can't see me.

Say 'No' if you want, don't worry about pleasing others. Your soul is breathing instincts through you all the time, listen to them.

Some rules are important, but some are made to be broken. It's knowing in your heart what's right and wrong. Live a little, dare to take risks. Do it for yourself.

Don't waste energy on proving your worth, the right people will be hit with it instantly. You'll create an energy together that will simply feed itself.

Be vulnerable, be real, be courageous. Have deep conversations. Don't be afraid of them, the only thing to fear is a world of small talk.

There is nothing more beautiful than a beautiful mind in confident skin.

This is true beauty, and you are beautiful.

# Colouring Me In

Before you, I drew a self-portrait,  
Within my borders,  
in colours I thought others wanted to see.

Then you came along and scribbled all over me  
in every shade you could find.  
Lines were no limits under your zig zags.  
Sometimes my heart screams under the weight  
of the pressure.  
Under all these layers I'm discovering.  
The me I always was, but never knew I could  
love until I met you.

I like colouring in together.  
You're a much better artist anyway.

# Two Under Two

You will worry, can my body handle this? Am I mentally ready to go through birth all over again? Your worries will become an ocean before you learn to ride the waves, you'll get tossed about, but you will ride them.

You'll wonder, if you could possibly love another as much as you loved your first. You'll cry at the longing you already feel over halving your heart. Then you'll lock eyes, and your heart will expand so much it aches.

You'll feel guilt to your core, having to decide whose needs come first when they're both crying. Guilt over promoting your first to 'oldest', when they're still your little baby.

When they first meet you'll be overwhelmed with contentment and confusion.

But it was meant to be this way, you won't be able to imagine life before your family of four.

Being tired will become a part of you. Some nights your head will only hit the pillow for seconds before it's up again. Sleep will become a distant memory. But so will these cuddles and the need for your comfort, probably not far apart from each other.

Friends will ask you to come out with them, you'll try and piece together their routines around their different stages and different nap times. You'll feel defeated at simply getting out the door. Eventually you will, exhausted and now with a backpack, but it will happen.

There will be days where every point feels like breaking point, on those days you'll wonder where the beauty is in all of this.

Then you'll realise there were so many pockets of beauty, only now you can catch your breath to see them.

Surrender to the waves.

Take each day as it comes

Forgive yourself.

It might be survival mode in the beginning, but it quickly becomes what you live for.

# Backwards

(first lockdown)

In my head right now...  
I don't know what's going on

Don't. Stop.  
Don't stop.

It's OK to laugh at that  
But is it OK to laugh at that?

Now we're in this jar of hearts  
I need more air holes

I'll connect within  
When I feel utterly disconnected

Let's just try and enjoy this activity together  
When's their bedtime?

It's my job to show them patience  
Unclench, breathe, just breathe

Maybe I'll just Skype some friends  
I can't be bothered

So I'll do some of these crafts and recipes  
But my mind is so cluttered by it all.

This is a Hibernation  
This is a Lockdown

Wanting to be an open book  
But I'm pages fluttering in the wind

While time stands still  
I'm twitching and restless

I don't HAVE to do anything.  
What do I do with all this time?

Why do we refer to this as TIME  
I feel as if I have no time at all

My feelings change moment by moment  
I have no idea how to feel

It is OK  
Not always being OK

When I feel so backwards  
I'll read this again backwards.



# Our Bubble

Oh my little girl.  
These sleepless nights, in our little bubble.  
While the world is heavy with so many worries.  
Your only worry is a world in which I am not there.

Your piercing cries rip through the walls, I begin pulling  
on my robe as the layers of sleep fall off me.

Right here we are marooned on this island together, you  
floating, me sinking.  
The new norm of me going to sleep with one eye open  
because breaking an early slumber is harder.

Even though you're the reason I wake through the night,  
You're the reason I wake in the morning.  
The reason my tank is empty  
And the same reason it's full.

In the late evening silence I wander down the hallway  
looking at both of your rooms.  
The homes beating heart.  
It's beautiful because you're safe here.  
In these small breaks from you I still fill them with you.  
Scrolling through photos of you,  
thinking of you.

You are my reason for exhaustion  
And you are also simply, my reason.

Being grateful doesn't mean this will be easy.  
The days and the nights are hard.

But we will get through it,  
You and I.  
In our little bubble.

# My Love Letter

When does it shift?

Where my being enough for you, simply isn't?

Does it happen as quickly as Mummy to Mum?

Will you be the tide and I'm shivering in the sand?

Is every beautiful little piece of proud independence just one step closer to being one step further, from me?

That little walk with your puffed out chest, elbows up, my knee bent.

Cheering for you, hands outstretched.

The same hand that hangs at my thigh when you find your confident stride.

Your words with proud inflections and overly pronounced syllables, become polished and profound.

Lazily rolling around on the floor together, afternoons spent as your jungle gym, holding you above me, like I could lift you forever.

Storing away your little bibs, your outfit now so grown up.

Your calls in the night.

My aching for rest, your aching for comfort.

One day, an aching silence.

The drawn out break up almost.

There's no goodbyes, and there's a thousand of them.

As you untangle me from you.

I'll never be ready for something I've been preparing you for my whole life.

But you will always be that love letter I will read over and  
over.  
Because you were, and always will be,  
More than enough for me.

# I Would Tell Her

If I could go back, I would tell her...

That one day she'll look back once the fog has cleared and realise those days were filled with magic. The type of magic you only see long after the trick. The beauty and then the bittersweet.

I'd tell her that the memories she'll lose herself in won't just be the milestones, but those long nights. She will never forget the pain of fatigue, but nostalgia will colour her memory and she'll find herself aching to breathe in those cuddles again.

I'd tell her about the tears, that with each cry she is learning.

I'll tell her I'm not just talking about her baby.

I'd tell her she'll have alone time again, but it will feel like two hearts wandering in different directions. She'll ask if it will always feel that way. I'll tell her I don't know yet.

I'd tell her that her eyes will close, the sun will rise, but in between those moments she'll feel so alone in the company of the stars. I'll tell her each of those stars is another mother feeling exactly the same way, that she is never alone.

I'd tell her she doesn't need to be the perfect mother, and the moment she believes there's such a thing is the moment she believes she is failing.

I'd tell her that she is moving mountains, even when she loses her footing.

Especially, when she loses her footing.

I'd tell her in some ways it gets easier, but for every first there is a last. The hardest part is not realising till later that a chapter has closed and you're turning back the pages trying to pinpoint when you forgot to say goodbye to that mispronounced word.

I'd tell her it isn't a typical love story, motherhood is the raw unedited version, with all the outtakes, which is what makes it the most beautiful love story of all.

I would try to describe the power of the infinite love she will feel, how it will consume her, scare her, comfort her. That a love like this is a silent language that speaks in volumes.

Only, I won't tell her these things, because she will forget, like we all do, so that we can discover them for ourselves, as we're meant to.

So instead I would simply tell her,  
that she is seen,  
she is amazing,  
and she is enough.