

A Mom's Poem

Composed for the occasion of my mother's 80th birthday 4-13-15

Take a breath and hold on...

It's my life in this story.

I'm a wife at nineteen

and at twenty, a mother.

I'm far from my home and a mother of one,

with much to be done,

and David is crying,

while Dave is out flying,

I'm so out of breath,

and I'm pregnant with Beth

and then there was two,

on that island with kids,

surrounded by fishes and surrounded by squids,

and there's so much to do,

theres so much to do!

There's clothes and there's food

and Dave's in the mood

and I'm fertile with eggs,

and the chores keep on growing with the cooking and sewing,

and Mom's far away and I'm sure that she prays everyday,

that I'll come back and say

that I'm staying and settling down,

but God, he had plans

and the Man's not forgiving

to those who are living regretting the setting

and worn from the changing of bedding from constant bed-wetting.

So my faith, it was shaken

but soon I'll awaken

and things will get easy and breezy,

and I'll get to choose what I use as my muse,

be it art or design,

and I start to believe

that one day I'll breathe
and then I discover...
I'm pregnant with Steve.
And damned if we're moving again,
and possibly proving that God in his wisdom is guiding me home,
and the boots that Dave wore will be traded for shoes and a suit
and the ways of a military man will be past,
but the last thing I said did not pass
instead, by the time Steve was one,
with two sons and a daughter,
there came one more to add on to our pad
and the day Claire was born I barely had time to rest and recoup,
since the chores kept increasing
and I'm so exhausted
from the birthday cakes frosted,
and now one in school
and the others are growing
and going to get bigger,
and I figure that four can be handled
and fed, dressed and sandaled,
if I try a bit harder.
But there was no let up
and I had to get up and go to the doctor,
because I was sickly
and misty
and all for good reason:
I was pregnant with Christy.
The brood now was five
and I'm barely alive.
I can't fathom another
and that's with the help of my father and mother
and the house is too small
so we'll move
and by then, all in all
into place, it will fall.
Five kids is enough
And I swear I'll be tough

and I won't take their gruff - call my bluff and you'll see
that my mind is made up.
I've got tricks up my sleeve
I believe there's a fix that I need, and Dave too,
and the Pope can condemn our need for control
and God in the heavens will likely be sore,
but I've had my share and I can't bear one more.
I won't carry another! I won't carry!
And then I discover I'm pregnant with Gary.
To add complications
that test a mom's patience,
we're moving again to a base in a place that I never have been,
because Dave's reenlisted
and he has insisted
that this is his chance to advance,
and of course my opinion is moot
and before long
I'm alone
with all six
and ready to end it
and I probably would have
if not for the joys
I got from observing the girls and the boys
and when Dave returned from his tour,
-I'm not joking-
after all of the diapers, the dramas, and near death from choking,
he proudly informed me
that we would be driving for thousands of miles in Ford station wagon
and all I could think was: at least he's around to help with with the beastsies.
Well this just continued
from Washington state, to Nebraska and Guam
and yet all along
I went with the plan,
but my man was ignoring my cries and implorings
to have my own life in this madness.
The sadness would stay on this course,
and unlike the bones broken and sickness,

which all can be healed,
our union would end in divorce.
I'll spare you the gory details
as a story like this so often entails,
and fast forward a bit,
to the part where I'm happy
and this may be sappy
but, I was in love and re-married,
and the priests and the nuns and the Pope all be damned,
we've a right to be happy
despite "what God planned".
Or, maybe this was what God planned?
And, who knows? Or, who cares?
At this point I'm content to accept all my choices and errors.
But life was no picnic with six teenage kids,
who're bright and who're stubborn,
and despite all the hugs and the crying,
the fighting and laughing,
the drugs and the lying,
the pets and the hobbies,
the sports and the stage,
the rage and the hormones that come with that age,
the ill-made decisions,
resentment,
acceptance,
commitment,
reluctance,
defiance,
compliance,
they all made their way,
one by one,
from the nest,
and the rest of their lives will be colored and guided
by things I decided in those years at our home,
and the day,
it did come,
when, alone we were left,

just the two of us,
Bill and me.

It was quiet.

Except for the echoes.

And I found a new sadness
that comes with a madness,
entwined with a gladness of making it through.

After all of the rearing and feeding,
the hearing and bleeding,
I bore the trials,
the barks and the gaffes
as well the triumphs and all of the laughs.
In the end I did make it!
I did make it through!
But now, I would ask:
What's a mother to do?

What *does* a mother do once her brood moves out?
Does she cry?
Does she whine?
Does she sulk?
Does she pout?

Maybe at first, just a bit,
but that's it,
there's no time to allow for all that,
with time on my hands,
there are paths to explore,
and thoughts to create,
and dreams to expand.
And almost three decades,
I had looked to this date,
with so much behind me,

it was so hard to see,
so hard to anticipate what would come next,
and what would come next was a rich as before,
as the kids made their lives,
finding husbands and wives,
divorced and remarried,
remarried and divorced,
and the rosebuds would go and have buds of their own,
and come with their own,
to my home,
where I happily fed them and gave them a bed.
I'm still busy now,
and the work never stops!
The work never will.
Thank goodness for Bill.
Bill? Bill? Biiiiiiii!?
Through all of these years,
it appears that my life on this earth,
was just to give birth,
and then carry on with the tasks and duties and the cares of a mom.
I can imagine no life other
than that of a mother,
and I'd tell you more now,
but there's food to be cooked,
and grandkids with dreams,
and their nona is there,
and it seems like it never ends
and though surely one day I'll have passed,
my daughter's daughters and their daughters too,
will learn what I've learned:
That I wasn't the first mother,
and I won't be the last.