

451c. or to be involved and I said that I might be busy with the baby if they brought her back from Great Ormond Street after passing the blockage, which was what I had been told might happen by the Special Care Baby Unit Sister. I told him that if my baby came back then I would be up in the Special Care Baby Unit where visitors were not allowed and so I would rather that he did not come. I felt thankful that visitors were not allowed in there as my baby should not even have been born yet and it would give us back some of the time that we should still have been spending so close together that we had lost out on, but as soon as I mentioned the fact that my baby might be coming back to the same hospital that I was in, the vicar began to speak to me as if he thought that I had no idea of what was going on at all. He said that he was a clergyman and he could go anywhere he liked in the hospital and that he had been in the special care baby unit many times. He said that he knew the staff in there and that he could go in there to see my baby without my consent and take the FATHER in there to see HIS child if he wanted to. The Vicar was trying to be firm about what he thought was best in the situation but he was frightening me. He told me quite certainly that my baby was NOT coming back to me that day by any means at all and he said that he would be coming in to see me that afternoon so definitely that I knew that I could not stop him. I tried to be firm and say that under no circumstances what so ever did I want the Clarkes to know about this as it was none of their business. He would not give me his

452c. word on that but said that we would discuss it further when he came to see me that afternoon. I asked him for his promise that he would take my baby's name off the sick list as I "did not want it read out in church, and I said 'not even by mistake!' He seemed amused that I had hardly ever spoken to him and yet I knew him so well to know that he was likely to have his own way and then say that he had 'forgotten' to take the name off the list. I did not know him at all or know what he was likely to do but it just came over me to say that and I found that I was saying exactly the right things and it was just happening like that. I carried on and said that I definitely wanted her name off the list and he got annoyed and asked me if I did not want my baby prayed for. He stopped and as if it had just dawned on him he asked me if I did not believe in God because he said that he knew that many young people did not. I most definitely did believe in God with a fervent love that had always upheld me but now I also remembered Father Nolan running up the stairs to get to my baby before she died and even though I had always had inclinations towards the Roman Catholic Church I now knew for certain that one day, away from my scorning family, I would enter the Catholic Church. I did not actually dislike Mr. Auckland but I was not going to let him get away with any doubts about my love of God and putting the whole thing together I found myself saying "of course!"

453c. believe in God" as if I was shocked that he had spoken like that but really I could see the funny side of it. knowing that I was definitely going to become a Roman Catholic, I said to him really fiercely "I'm a Roman CATHOLIC, I believe in God better than you do!". Possibly thinking that it was the old jealousy between Catholics and Protestants flaring up in the name of the love of God and as if it was a cheek that an unmarried mother could fiercely defy a Church of England canon that her love of God was stronger than his, he chuckled down the telephone and said "God bless you!!" It sounded strange to hear him use the word 'God' as in all the years that I had known him I had never actually heard him mention God before. I said "Its not that I don't want her prayed for, I'd be glad of your prayers because I'm a firm believer in the power of prayer but its the neighbours who I don't want to know about this because its none of their nosy business". He spoke very sincerely and reassured me that he would pray for my baby but take her name off the prayer list in church. He said that he would definitely come in to see me that afternoon and on a friendly note we said goodbye and I put the phone down. It struck me as odd that the money had lasted so long as I had only put 2<sup>9</sup> in and I had been on the telephone for ages and still no pips had gone. I knew you got a longer time on the telephone at weekends but most of that telephone call had been free. I wondered if I could look up Great Ormond Streets telephone number and ask how my baby was but I immediately found myself utterly useless. I could not think of the alphabet to look up the number,

454 c. my thoughts became confused, I could not use my hands to hold a directory or dial a number and I could hardly hold what was left of my money. I stood there totally helpless and unable to do anything and an invisible force gently turned me back on my fumbling way towards the ward. Once I was turned away from the telephone I felt better again so I went to turn round to try to telephone again and as soon as I did I became helpless again. I was not meant to telephone for some reason and feeling slightly afraid as if it was suddenly rather spooky in that corridor, I went back to the ward to where my bed was.

When I got back to my bed I collected my washing things and went to wash myself. When I went to the toilet I found that a tiny Placenta and cord from the tiny foetus that I had lost the night before had come away on the sanitary towel as I had been walking about to the telephone. It was about a quarter to eight in the morning and as a lot of the 'phantom' pain that I had been in ended with that, so did my labour and since ten to one on Thursday morning it had been sixty six hours and fifty five minutes long. It had been a very long time and although my body felt as if my labour was over, my mind did not because the worry was not over and I had no children to hold. The tiny cord was like a piece of hollow ventricle, about four inches long and it had been cleanly cut at both ends. No knife had cut inside me and as soon as I saw

455c the way that the cord had been cut I thought of the way Mrs. Clark had promised me that she would see to it that I never had any grandchild of hers and the way that Norman had broken my cross and chain by breaking his at a moment that he decided to even though he was miles away from where I was. I felt afraid of them all and I felt sure that they had all been practising witchcraft the same as my parents did. It was horrible and I felt afraid that Mrs. Clark might have killed my baby with her power without knowing that there were two babies. I shuddered and flushed the cord and tiny placenta down the toilet to go where the dead foetus had gone the night before and after washing and changing my nightdress I went back to bed feeling mentally and physically worn out. As soon as I was back in bed a nurse came over and made me take two yellow tablets that had been left on my locker and although I tried to think about telling her what had just happened I would have had so much explaining to do that I gave up before I started. I must have fallen asleep straight away without realising it because I found myself being woken up by a domestic who asked me what I wanted for breakfast and I found that someone had left me a tray while I had been asleep and yet I had not noticed that anyone had been near my bed. I had a boiled egg again and I was acutely embarrassed that my slowness in saying what I wanted irritated the domestic. She did not seem to like something about me and she seemed to shrink away from me as if the sight of the way I spoke embarrassed her and she found me distasteful to look at. When

456 c. I got my breakfast it took me ages to eat it and it took every effort and all my energy to do it gracefully. I had become so clumsy that I just could not believe where my beautiful table manners had gone and how difficult feeding myself had become. The domestic was annoyed again when I was slow finishing with the tray and the nurses started saying to each other again that I should not have been on that ward at all but on a medical ward. They seemed to completely dismiss the fact that I had had a baby at all and I felt utter despair that I might be moved to another ward and treated as if I had not even had a baby. They seemed to treat me as if the question of having the baby was over and best forgotten completely but my child was still alive and even if she died I would be in a terrible state of grief. Far from it being something that was best forgotten and not mentioned, it was something that I would never ever forget or get over. They seemed to treat me as if I had been totally irresponsible to have had a baby in the state I was in and as if they thought I was normally heavily handicapped or something. It was so unfair because it was the way that I had been treated in labour that had done it to me and if anything, I was in such a weak physical state because I had been so capable and responsible in caring for my family. I wanted to stay on that ward because I was a new mother the same as everyone else and I was really worried about the nurses attitude towards my sudden weak state of health because it seemed that whether or

457c. not they let me be with my baby if she came back depended on it.

While mothers started to get their things ready to go to the bathroom several nurses pushed about half a dozen babies in their cots down the ward past my bed and into the nursery for their bath. By pushing two cots and pulling two cots one nurse could walk along with a chain of four cots by herself and so the nurses were collecting up all the babies on the ward to bath them all as quickly as possible. It seemed a very unprofessional way to do it because with the nurses chattering to each other and not really relating to individual babies one could so easily have been put back in the wrong cot. It was awful to think that they were tiny human beings that they were handling because they were just looking on them as 'work' to be done as quickly as possible and not as human beings to be taken care of. The babies were newborn human beings and although they were all sturdy they were only emotionally prepared for gentleness, quietness and understanding and the way the nurses handled them seemed to make the babies reactions become more 'anxious' and their movements more jerky as even at a few days old they seemed to be afraid of what jolt or bump the cot was going to hit against next and shock them. They seemed to be staring with unseeing eyes as if they knew that they were in the terrifying state of being vulnerable. One mother did not want her baby to go off with all the others and she said that she could see to her herself. The nurses just took the cot and said that the mother could not go with her baby either, so the mother got a bit upset and said

458c. that she did not want one of the nurses who was a male nurse handling her baby girl. I knew exactly how she felt and what the nurses should have done was to leave the baby in her cot with the mother beside her bed and later when the other babies were done one of the female nurses could have taken the mother and her baby down to the nursery together and let the mother bathe the baby herself if she wanted to. The midwife and the mother could have had a friendly chat and the mother would have been reassured because that rapport between a midwife and a mother was the whole pivot point of good midwifery. Instead they just forcibly took the cot with the baby in it and wheeled it away and left the mother crying on her bed. One of the other mothers had to go over and reassure her and explain that she could bathe her baby on the day they went home but the mother of the baby wanted to do it herself straightaway. She seemed to need her baby and need to look after her herself all the time and she talked as if she did not want or could not bear to be made to 'wait' for it. She was not possessive about her baby, it seemed more like genuine anguish that she could not explain and I knew exactly how she felt because after all I had been through in my life I felt the same way and I knew why too. The other Mother explained to the babys mother that she could not go down to the nursery at bath time because there was not enough room in there with so many babies all being bathed at the same time.

459 c. and she said that the nurses checked the babies over for rashes or abnormalities and filled in their charts. As if that was what was bothering her the mother said anxiously that she knew and she kept looking towards the nursery as if in her mind she could see through the wall. I could do that too and just as I had 'heard' the telephone conversation between my G.P. and my consultant so I could 'see' straight through walls. I knew instinctively where each cot was and where each nurse was in the nursery and that mother, whether she realized it or not, was looking straight through the wall at her own baby. Another mother who was in the bed in the corner on my left was looking at that mother too and she shuddered. She said that she had just had her second child in this hospital and that it had not been like this when she had her first child. Other mothers agreed with her and the mother who was reassuring the mother whose baby had been taken to be bathed said that everyone seemed to have had a bad time. Several other mothers agreed but some said that they had been lucky and that the nurses had been very kind to them. One mother told the other mothers how the Sister on the labour Ward had been marvellous to her in her labour and how the Sister had made three cups of tea herself after the baby had been born and how she had sat down and had tea together with her and her husband while the Mother was still sitting on the delivery table and the baby was in its cot. The Sister had chatted to the mother and her husband about what they were going to call the baby and what the babys nursery at home was like and she had said that she

460 c. liked a delivery where the father was present. As she finished talking another Mother said that her husband had brought in Champagne for the Doctors and they had all had a glass together. As they spoke their words stung me with hurt as I remembered how it had been for me. I would not have minded being just left on the delivery table with no one talking to me or of the one nurse who got me water instead of tea because I knew she did not want to leave me while she boiled water to make tea as everyone else had gone off on their break, or of having to get myself onto the trolley to go to the ward, if I had not heard how all the other mothers had been treated. I was the only one who had had no one with me and I was the only one who had had no attention. I think it was because there was no one with me to see if I was not looked after that no one had bothered to look after me. All the other mothers had been washed straight away after the birth and the hurt of finding that out stung hard as I remembered not only having been left but that not one of the people standing idly watching me had been bothered to even wipe my face when I needed it.

In the group of mothers on my particular ward, and the particular set of nurses on the labour ward and maternity ward it was painfully clear that those mothers who looked poorer and had coarser voices had been through a harder time than those who were better dressed and were better off. It seemed as if the

461C. nurses without knowing what they were doing, looked at the women and judged whether or not they looked as if they were used to having a hard time in life and if they were then they did not bother about making things in labour or in the early days after the birth easier for them. Regarding pain the nurses could have been right but not regarding human kindness and understanding. Women who were used to having a hard time in life probably could get on with looking after themselves and coping with their baby well because they were used to having to do everything for themselves but underneath the hard exterior was a very soft and sometimes sad interior and that person needed more understanding than someone who was better off and somehow managed to monopolize the nurses time with questions that any fool could have answered. The sort of time that the mothers said that they had had in the labour ward exactly matched the nurses attitude towards them on the ward as the nurses had more time for patients who were better spoken and better dressed and the nurses would spend more time with them than with another patient who asked for help with exactly the same problem. The nurses also did not mind touching the personal possessions of someone who had more expensive things and they would pick up baby toys that had been brought in as presents for the baby and admire them and would help the patient fold her clothes away or get her washing things ready where as they would hardly touch the things of anyone poor in case their things which were older and well used might be dirty. Actually it was the really poor people who were cleaner

462c than the patients who had brand new things because they knew that they had to be careful to keep everything clean if they were poor because older things seemed to hold the dirt more and dirt breed germs and illness. The nurses only seemed to have time for people who looked attractive and had plenty of flowers and chocolates around them. As soon as a mother so much as tidied the top of her locker the nurses were round her offering to help her when there were other things to do on the Ward so that the Mother gave them Chocolates and Sweets. One Mother complained nicely to the other Mothers that she had only had one of her own Chocolates because the nurses had eaten the rest of about four boxes. She said that she had not minded but she had wanted to save a couple of boxes as they were nice to open when her and her husband had friends to dinner at home but she could not be rude to the nurses when they came to her bed and they seemed to hover round anyone who they might get something from. One Mothers chocolates and flowers had started arriving while she was still in the Labour Ward and so she had noticed how the midwives came around her until, knowing that she would be getting loads of flowers, she had started with one bouquet of flowers and a box of chocolates to them. All the time as the mothers spoke it seemed that it was not how much pain a Mother had been in that mattered to them but of how kind the Midwives had been to them

463c. that counted. Pain killers had played little part in it as most of the mothers said that they had not worked anyway but if the staff had been really nice to them it had made all the difference, unfortunately it seemed that those who had husbands who looked as if they would cause trouble if their wives were not treated nicely and those who were well supplied with nice things by their relatives were treated much more nicely than those who had less going for them, but it was generally agreed that some mothers had had a very bad time and one mother said that she would never ever have another child after what she had been through on the Labour Ward.

Then the mother in the end bed on my left turned to me and said that she had heard all the confusion over me. She told the other mothers that she had been the only other patient on the Labour Ward when 'all pandemonium' (to use her own words) had broken loose over me soon after I had come in. She said that she had heard doctors rushing about everywhere over me and she asked me if I had had a cardiac arrest. She said that her husband had been sitting in the Fathers waiting room watching the Miss World Contest with the Doctors when a nurse had rushed in and said that she had found me breathing. Suddenly the whole group of women were looking at me excitedly waiting for me to fill in the details of what had gone on but I just sat in my bed looking at them blankly and I did not know what to say. I knew that my breathing had stopped but it had not fully dawned on me that I had gone as far as a Cardiac Arrest. I knew what a Cardiac Arrest was

464c. and what to do about it but it had never dawned on me that I had had one and I suddenly began to wonder if that was what had happened to me when everything had gone black and I had been shot into space and the Sister had been turning people away at the door and just one Doctor had come in. I must have seemed a bit stupid as if I was trying to remember it and one of the mothers said to the others that I did not seem to know what had happened to me. Another mother said that perhaps THAT was what was wrong with me and if so I should be being monitored or something. There was a nurse checking charts and she heard our conversation and came over because she was interested and she asked me if I DID have a Cardiac Arrest. I said that I did not think so and the other mother who had been on the labour Ward told her everything she had heard. The nurse checked the charts at the end of my bed and said that she would have to go and check it. She went off down to the office and it seemed as if it was news to her that nobody had told her. While she was gone a Path.lab.technician came along to my bed and took some blood from me. A senior nurse came along with the technician and they both seemed to know something quite official that I did not know and although I had more faith in God than to be afraid of them, there was something about what they knew that made me feel quite cold. The technician spoke to me very simply and told me that the blood was being sent to Great Ormond Street

465c. and that it was for my baby incase they operated on her and she needed it. As soon as she said that I knew that she was lying to me and that although the blood was going to Great Ormond Street that it was not intended for my baby. It was not enough for a transfusion because it was only a little drop in two small tubes used to TEST blood. I just 'knew' it was going for a blood test and a strange and horrible feeling of foreboding came over me that there was going to be some kind of suffering for my baby and I over that test that I could not explain. I felt so alone and in an agony of mind because nobody would speak to me openly and tell me the truth about what they were doing. The way they were treating me was building up a barrier of mistrust between them and I because they could not tell me the truth even about the simplest things. I could tell that they were lying to look at them because I could see little cosmic colours around people that glowed and changed colour when the person was doing something or thinking something. The colours matched the person and their mood and attitude so exactly that you could 'see' what a person was thinking and feeling even when they tried to hide it by lying. When they felt something more strongly or got annoyed or were trying to cover something up then the colours glowed into deep colour and became like tiny sparks of coloured electricity. I had been aware of vaguely seeing something around people when I had seen straight through the walls in the Labour Ward but I had thought it was just the light in there especially after the lights dimmed when the baby was born but since being given the green tablet on the Saturday morning it had grown clear almost without me noticing

466c. it because I had become so acutely sensitive about everything because I had lost so much and was suffering so much without having any way of explaining it all to somebody. I did not know what to say to the nurse and the technician to try to explain that they could be quite open about things with me but I was afraid to say anything because I knew that they had the upper hand because they had taken my baby and all I could do was to smile nicely and pretend that I did believe what they had told me about the blood being for a blood transfusion and not that it was for some special blood test that I suddenly 'knew' it was for.

The nurse who had come along with the path. lab technician waited for her to take the blood and when she had done it she spoke to me very firmly as if she was being very positive about what she had to say but that she was NOT really asking my consent. She spoke to me most officially as if everything that she was speaking about was already decided and that what she had to say to me was only a formality. She said to me "If anything goes wrong with your baby and she doesn't live then will you let her kidneys and other organs be used to help another sick baby?" I was horrified and a feeling of fear and panic spread through me that what she was saying was more serious than she was letting on and I just knew that this was going to be the only opportunity I got to speak out and save my baby. I said "NO, nothing of my baby's is to be used in any transplant, My baby needs everything

467c. She's got and even if she dies and has a postmortem everything of hers is to be put back and buried with her." The nurse became very sarcastic and she thought she was going to make me feel that I was wrong in my decision because she said to me "Don't you think you are being very selfish about it, if your child couldn't live wouldn't you like to help another sick child?" I did not know where the words came from because I felt so afraid that I was speechless but a voice that I hardly recognized spoke out quite firmly from inside me and I found myself feeling grateful and surprised that I was able to answer the nurse like that. I seemed as if I was only a puppet and the voice that was stronger than mine spoke out from beyond my own voice and I felt very strangely comforted that I was not alone because God himself was with me. I answered her firmly and said "No, I'm not being selfish, I'm sticking up for my baby's rights. She's come into this world with nothing but her body, soul and mind. She has never had the chance to wear her own clothes that are ready for her, she has never seen her own home, she has never seen her boys that are waiting for her. If she dies she is going to be buried with her whole body and nobody's going to rob her body of her organs as well. And anyway she may not die and if she does die I want to be there and see my child and if there is a post mortem then I can pay for a doctor to be there to see that nothing is taken of her organs because she has a right to everything that is hers!"

I could see the nurse staring at me, in dismay as if she could not believe that I could answer like that or that I knew so much. I did not know

468C. anything and what I said just came out like that but I truly meant it and I had an awful fear that if I gave in and agreed to what they wanted then they would not bother to try to save Elizabeth, and I just would not give up on her. "Anyway" I said, as if I was beginning to consider the matter. "If they DO take my babys organs what are they going to do, give me the baby that lives? If my babys heart is beating inside another baby that's my baby, because its my babys heart that's the only thing keeping it alive. What are they going to do give me that baby to put in my empty cot." The nurse looked absolutely aghast and I have never before or since seen that awful look on anybodys face. She knew that if anything went ahead and they used any of my babys organs then they were going to have a fight over whose baby the living one was and it would not have been a case of cutting the baby in half as in the story of king solomon because the baby would already have been cut up and my babys heart would know and love me as its mother in which ever body it found itself in. The nurse also realized that I was not going to let go of my babys chances at any cost and I think she had an insight into the depth that my grief would reach if I did loose my baby. The nurse did not stand to argue with me, she was so furious with me that she just gave me a look of utter contempt and stormed off away from me to the office without saying anything to me. She was not a nurse from the ward that I

469C. was on but she must have known all the staff because after some time she came back along the ward from the office and spoke to the ward sister and some nurses who were making beds along the other side of the ward. She indicated towards me and said furiously "Do you know she's REFUSED!" The Sister knew what she was talking about and said "What, after all the tests they've done!" The nurse agreed furiously as if it was the general opinion that everybody was annoyed about it and she said quite irritably "It would have been the youngest one they had ever done because the organs would have come from a Premature baby." She said that a furious row was going on in the Premature baby unit as to why I had not been told the truth in the first place, but then she shrugged as if it was no use and said "You have got to do the tests before you ask relatives incase the baby is not suitable." She said that the Doctors were checking over the forms that I had signed and apparently I was perfectly right that I had only signed forms for tests to be done for my baby's sake. The Sister said to her "Surely they explained to her that there was no hope for the baby" but the nurse said that was what the row was about. She said that they had explained to me that there was very little chance but that I had still signed the forms for tests to be done in the hope that they could do something for my baby and so I still had the right to refuse to let them use any of her organs. The Sister said "but surely they told her" but the nurse replied that if they had told me then I would not have let the baby go and the operation

470c. could have been done here anyway. She said that parents were normally told like that and when they were finally told that nothing more could be done for their child than they did give their consent for the sake of thinking that there could be some purpose in their own child's life if their child, could help another child to live but no one realized that she would be so selfish as to say no completely. She told the sister that the confusion had come because two sets of forms had been sent to Great Ormond Street with the baby. She said that I had signed some forms but that my mother had signed a whole set of forms giving consent for everything but she had not read them. The nurse said that the doctors at Great Ormond Street had spoken to my parents on the telephone at 9am that morning but when they had told them that they wanted to use my baby's organs my mother had refused point blank. She told the sister irately that she did not know why the hospital was so intent on keeping me away from the baby because it was my whole family who were against orthodox medicine by the sound of what my mother had said to Great Ormond Street on the telephone. She said that I was refusing because I was only concerned about my own baby but that my parents were refusing because they did not believe in medical transplants and because THEY wanted the baby for themselves. The nurse said that Great Ormond Street were furious because the

471c Premature Baby Unit should have found out first whether there were any religious beliefs that would mean that the family would completely refuse permission under any circumstances. She said that Great Ormond Street had asked the hospital to ask me for my consent because I was the baby's mother and not my mother as it was my signature that counted but that now that I had refused Great Ormond Street were furious because no one had expected that. The sister said "so she doesn't want the baby now. I suppose she's changed her mind" and the nurse said "It is different when a mother has seen the baby, they do change their minds. I can guarantee that she would have given her consent if she hadn't seen that baby. If they wanted to do all this then they shouldn't have shown her the baby." The sister had listened to the nurse say that I would probably have agreed if I had never seen the baby but she did not reply to that as if she did not quite agree with the nurse about that. The nurse told the sister that the Doctors at Great Ormond Street had asked my parents if they would go up to the hospital that afternoon and if they turned up then the Doctors felt certain that they would be able to persuade my parents to sign their consent if they sat down and told them the full facts of what my baby's chances were. She said that they were trying to get hold of the baby's father because he sounded like he would give his consent and it was his right to sign the forms. The sister looked at me and said to the nurse "Couldn't they give her something to knock her right out so that she wouldn't know anything about it?"

472C. The nurse said that was what the Doctors had planned to do until the Doctors at Great Ormond Street had spoken to my parents on the telephone but it was no use knocking me out for the day if my parents would not give their consent. She said that the Doctors had said that I was under heavy sedation and they could not understand how I had not given my consent because after all the drugs that I had been given I should have agreed to anything. She said that even after all I had been given I had still known what I was doing and had enough sense to say no if it was not what I wanted. She said that they could only hope that my parents would see sense or that they could contact the fathers family to see if any of them would be willing to sign for the organs to be used because I did not have sole rights to the child as I was under age but she said that it was really too late because as I had said no so definitely I would only go and cause trouble about it later. The Sister said that I was not under age and that even if I was, I was still entitled to my own opinions and to be respected for them but she said that MOST people would have given their consent and the nurse said that it was a shame for the other parents that two babies had to die instead of just one. She went off and after she had gone I got some filthy looks from the nurses and there was a general feeling amongst them that I had disgraced myself because I was mean and had let everybody down.

473c. As I had lay listening to the nurses I had begun to feel afraid of what was going on. I had not changed my mind about wanting my baby as the sister had just said because my baby had never been unwanted by any means at all and I felt horrified that the nurse could think that I would have, had a different opinion about my baby's organs if I had not been allowed to see her. I felt so desperately worried about my baby and that I would never give up hoping that she would be alright whatever other people thought or wanted me to do. My baby had a right to keep her own organs but instead of feeling that I wanted to get up and argue with the nurses, I just felt very ill indeed. The worry and the strain of the nurses disapproval was draining every ounce of strength out of me and I was getting so weak that I was feeling desperately ill. My baby was so far away and things were so desperately hopeless but in order to do something practical to help my baby in the face of so much disapproval from other people about my wish to struggle to keep my poor baby alive, I got out the knitting that I had been doing at home that my mother had brought into the hospital for me to do, and I carried on with it. The baby cardigan that I was knitting was yellow and I was knitting it in the very first size in baby clothes. I had lots of bigger things that would be slightly too big as a baby grew very quickly but I had wanted something that would be just the right size for my newborn baby to wear straight away even if it would only last for the first few weeks because it was only in the newborn size. I had bought yellow baby wool and had already made one tiny lacy cardigan that I had expected to be part of the

474c. first set of clothes that my baby  
wore and that would fit perfectly.  
I was actually on the second tiny  
cardigan that I was knitting  
because I had bought more wool  
than I had needed and I had  
managed to knit two tiny identical  
cardigans out of the bag of baby  
wool that I had bought in a small  
sale in our local woolshop. I was  
halfway through knitting the second  
tiny cardigan when I had already  
given birth and so my mother had  
brought it into the hospital for me  
to finish. I was quite excited at  
the thought of having a whole  
day just to sit in bed and knit  
for my baby and it seemed quite  
impossible that nobody expected  
me to do any work on the ward in  
order to earn my keep. That kind of  
rest was just what I needed espec-  
ially as my family were not coming  
to visit me that afternoon and as I  
could knit so quickly I wondered what  
I could do when I had finished the little  
cardigan because I only had one side  
of it and a sleeve to complete. As I began  
to knit it dawned on me how slow I  
was because I usually knitted so well  
and so quickly that the stitches seemed  
to fly across the needles. I found that  
my mind was working at a normal  
speed but my body was so slow and I  
did not expect that. It was when I was  
trying to write or knit that I found  
myself slower than my mind as if my  
body was trying to work against a  
very heavy pressure that did not  
affect my thinking, but I just carried  
on as best as I could for my baby's sake.  
I knew the pattern that I was knitting  
off by heart because it was only to knit  
one stitch, make one stitch, knit two  
together, knit one, row then the same in

475c. just purl but as I knitted a few rows it looked as if I was doing it in slow motion although I was actually trying to knit at my usual speed. I struggled, fighting against the slow tiredness to work at my usual speed because it seemed as if I felt alright until I came to use my hands but when I used them to do something like writing or knitting my brain came over sleepy. I knew that I had to fight that feeling in order to carry on as usual for my baby's sake and I just could not accept it as being right and moral that I could lie there and do nothing while my baby was so sick. There was also the total acceptance deep in my habits that I must always occupy myself usefully because I had never been allowed to do anything else and if I did not have my baby with me to change, feed and care for then it was unthinkable that I should do anything else but carry on knitting for her the same as I had done when I was expecting her. In the time that it normally took me to knit a whole side of a cardigan I managed to do a couple of rows with a great effort. I was alright if I lay still but when I tried to knit a tremendous tiredness came over me and it took an inhuman effort to break through it and sit there in bed and knit each enormous stitch as if I was doing it in slow motion while I was actually trying to do it quickly. I felt embarrassed too because I felt as if my eyes were rolling about with the effort and as if it took all my self control to maintain my self dignity and sit there knitting like a lady but I knew with a very real worry that it was wrong to stop and 'waste time' so I carried on as if I had no power to stop. A group of nurses came along

476c. and stopped to watch me and one  
said incredulously to the others  
that she had never seen anything  
like it, because I was sitting up  
in bed knitting under heavy sedation.  
When she said that I knew that  
the awful tiredness and unreal  
feeling that I was suffering from  
was sedation and I wondered  
when they had sedated me as I  
had only had a couple of small  
tablets and I supposed that where  
I was so weak it only took such  
a small amount of drugs to have  
such a devastating effect on me. As  
I sat there carrying on with the  
knitting I looked up and smiled at  
the nurses and they came to look  
at my knitting. They asked me a few  
questions about whether I had wanted a  
boy or a girl and I answered all their  
questions very positively because I was  
so pleased to have someone to talk to  
about my baby. I found that where I  
was so tired because I was using all  
my energy trying to knit, I was less  
able to speak. I could not use long  
sentences and I had to make do with  
shorter sentences than I would have  
liked to use but I said my reply very  
clearly and with all the dignity that I  
could muster so that it sounded  
perfectly alright. The nurses did not  
seem to be interested in what I was  
saying at all and one of them shook  
her head and said to the others that  
all the drugs that I had been given  
should have knocked me right out  
but they had not had any effect on  
me at all. The nurses were annoyed  
about it because it was obviously  
not what they wanted and an awful  
feeling of suffering came over me that  
they had only come to talk to me in the  
hope that I would not be able to speak

477c. to them. I remembered the nurse who had given me the green tablet that she had said I must take if I wanted to see my baby before she was christened and then of the other one who had gone back to the office to tell the Doctors that it was alright for them to come and speak to me once I had become unable to speak in reply to her questions and I began to feel myself panic as I wondered why they wanted me to be so sleepy that I could not speak to them. A horrible depth of suffering overwhelmed me and as hard as I tried I could not work out why it was that not being allowed to speak was hurting my feelings so very, very much, but I just carried on like a lady and never let the suffering that I was going through show to anyone else at all. I just smiled at the nurses politely and tried to be very dignified as I carried on but my knitting was so clumsy that I felt as if how I was must be what it must be like to be drunk and I could understand how someone who had got themselves drunk when they really had not meant to could stand in the street and raise their hat to a passing lady, or talk in a very well educated way as if they were trying to behave quite normally even though they could not quite manage it because in that state of having your brain feeling muddled it was your deep personality and the things that you had been taught were right to do that seemed to come to the surface.

One of the nurses went off to the office and then came back and told the other nurses that I was definitely a drug addict as my blood test had come back from the lab full of drugs and she said that they were to ask me what drugs I normally took. Panic rose inside me because it was the second time that I had been surrounded by a group of nurses who seemed to be

478c. 'against' me for some unknown reason and as she turned to me and asked me very firmly to tell her what drugs I normally took, I answered her determinedly and truthfully that until I had come into hospital I had never had any drugs at all in my life. I said that I had just had two phenolic tablets years ago although I could not remember when, and that my system must be so clear of any drugs at all that I was having a horrible reaction to what they were giving me but the nurse just laughed and said to the others "That's what they all say!". She explained to them that my system was so used to drugs that all the drugs that they were giving me was having no effect on me whatsoever and she said that it was the baby they were worried about. She spoke to the other nurses all the time and contemptuously ignored me as if I was just a piece of dirt and I began to be really afraid of it all because it was like living in a nightmare that I could not wake up from and I repeated to her that I had never taken any drugs at all. She did not reply but turned and picked up my knitting asking me what on earth it was. She said that it was far too small and she asked me if I had no idea? She asked me nastily what I thought I was having, a DOLL or a baby? She dropped my knitting back on my bed at me and said "Dolls clothes!" with disgust and "They won't fit any baby!" as if she was more determined that she would see to it that they never went on my baby rather than that the clothes

479c might not fit. She said to the other nurses that she had hated me ever since she had heard from the nurses on the Premature Baby Unit that I had said that the baby was just like a little doll when I had first seen her and as she spoke so nastily I vaguely recalled that it was MY mother who had said that. The nurse was really spiteful and it seemed from the look on her face that she couldn't be nasty enough to me because she did not think it was right that I should have a baby at all. As it happened my baby was so tiny that the cardigan I was knitting did not fit her until she was three months old and even if that nurse did not approve of the tiny clothes, I was actually making the right size clothes for the size baby that I had given birth to. That cardigan fitted her for the first six months and the second size baby clothes that I had already knitted for her which should have fitted her from three months to six months old were still a bit big for her when she wore them for the first time on her first birthday. Somehow I just 'knew' instinctively what might be just right for MY baby and more than anything I felt the most awful feeling of suffering that they were not giving me credit for 'knowing' things and being right about it too. A deeper feeling of suffering came over me about that as if it had been bad enough before I had my baby but now it was even worse because I seemed to 'know' more than ever. It was awful enough coming to terms with such strange instincts but for that nurse to be tormenting me with telling me that I had 'nobody' made it feel

480c. worse because what I really needed was for someone to understand that I suddenly 'knew too much' and because I could not explain it the feeling of suffering it all alone with no one understanding it with me made it much worse than it should have been. I knew how I felt about the situation that I was in and it was the situation that I was in that had gone tragically wrong and that was different from normal, it was not what I was doing that was wrong because actually I was adapting myself to the situation perfectly because I was knitting baby clothes for the actual size baby that I had got. When the nurses tried to convince me that the opposite thing from what I was doing was the right thing to do they made me feel so alone because it made me realize that they had not got the depth of understanding about the situation that I had got and because I could not explain it all, the way the nurses were so quick to think that they knew what was right pushed the feeling of suffering that I was in even higher.

Another two nurses came along bringing me two more yellow tablets and they told me that although I badly needed a blood transfusion I was not going to be given one as my blood pressure was too high. After a while a physiotherapist came along with a sister who pointed me out and stood by the end of my bed while the physiotherapist came up and spoke to me as if I was a child. She had obviously been told 'all about me' from her attitude and I was

481c. determined to let them both see that I was perfectly alright or a sudden fear came over me that they would not let me have my baby. Fear, panic and disbelief welled up inside me that I could have found myself in such an unbelievable nightmare and mingled with grief about my baby, it felt unbearable and yet I never showed it for one moment but I carried on as normal in front of the nurses. The physiotherapist asked me my name and with all my dignity I said "Mrs Maple" even though I knew I was not actually married. The Sister laughed and checking my notes for my Christian name she said "its Anne" to me and the physiotherapist. The physiotherapist said "Thats a nice name" but she looked dubious as if she did not want to call me by my Christian name when I had only offered my surname. The Sister went off and the physiotherapist said to all the patients on the ward that she was going to do post natal exercises and she asked everyone to get on their beds, which they did but she stayed beside my bed watching my every move. She asked me which was my weak side, then when I said that I had not got a 'weak side' which I had not, she started the exercises with a determined look as if to say that if I was not going to co-operate then she would soon see for herself which side was my weak side. She got everybody laying on their beds doing leg lifting exercises but it was me who she stood beside assessing and because she stood watching me everyone else was watching me too as they did the exercises which was very embarrassing for me, especially since I was so weak that I could hardly lift my legs at all. I thought

482c. that the Physiotherapist should have drawn the curtain's round my bed and have asked me to do the things she wanted to see, in private, but she seemed to think that if she assessed me while she got everyone doing the same thing then she could assess me without me knowing that I was being assessed but what she was doing had been done to me so many times before that it was obvious and I knew. I could sense what she was thinking and I just knew that the Physiotherapist seemed to think that if she drew the curtains around my bed then I would become hysterical or something; but that was totally wrong and I would have been so grateful for some privacy.

At one point the physiotherapist asked me to lift my leg higher which I did but it was not easy because I was so weak and the bed was not very firm. The mattress was bouncy in the middle and as I moved so the mattress moved as well and because I was so weak the movement of the mattress seemed to roll me from side to side as if I was too weak to stay put very easily. I managed to do what the physiotherapist asked me to do but I was so wobbly that it was awful. I felt that I should have been doing those exercises on a firm surface where I would have had better control of my limbs but I could not say anything because if the physiotherapist asked me to get out of bed it might look worse because I had difficulty moving and had become so slow. The exercises

483c. that I was doing looked worse as well because I was doing them alongside the other mothers who were so much stronger than I was and better recovered after the birth of their babies than I was. After a while of doing the leg exercises something very small 'broke' in the lower part of my back. It was not a bone, and was quite painless but something 'went' and after that I just seemed to move my legs and they went anywhere. After a few minutes I gave up doing what the physiotherapist said because I was exhausted and I lay still. The physiotherapist urged me to carry on but I was not only physically tired out but I was becoming very sleepy from the last lot of tablets the nurses had given me and I gave up. I had always hated P.E and I was NOT back at school and I thought that I would do my Post-Natal exercises in privacy because I was not one to make a public exhibition of myself in front of all those women, even if they were very nice people and also I was far too tired to do anymore exercises at all and my heart was beating very unsteadily and slowly in my chest like a clock that had got loud before it stopped. So I stopped what I was doing before my heart stopped because that was what it felt like it was going to do and I was very breathless too.

When the physiotherapist realized that she could not get me to do any more exercises she began to question me about whether I had difficulty with my arms at all and with panic rising inside me that they would not let me both my own baby and would let my Mother take over if I told her about the struggle I was having

484c. to write and knit since I had had my baby and so I told her that my arms were fine. I knew that I was very weak and that I was worn out after so much housework and what I needed was a quiet rest and that I would be perfectly alright. I also knew that I would be so careful when it came to bathing my baby that she would be perfectly safe and because I was so determined that no one should take the joy of motherhood and bathing my own baby away from me, I knew that I had to present myself as being as capable as possible. There was no question of them offering me any help as the nursing staff seemed to already have it fixed in their minds that I was not going to have my baby anyway. They just seemed to need to see me unable to do the things they asked me to in order to settle the matter. Everything seemed to be stacked so highly against me for no reason at all and I knew that if I gave in even once to show myself as the failure that they expected me to be then my Mother would be the one to come in and take MY baby. The sisters had already said to her that she could bathe the baby and I knew that I had so little chance to have what I wanted against my mothers bullying ways. The staff were only interested in assessing whether or not I was capable of having my baby or not and even then they seemed to have already made up their minds that they had decided that I was not going to have the baby anyway.

The Physiotherapist asked me several questions about my toes

485c. and if I could move them and I did every-  
thing she told me to about moving them  
even though I had already stopped the  
exercises once because I was so tired. No  
one seemed to see just how tired I was  
and they seemed to keep on and on getting  
me to do more and more beyond real  
tiredness. As I got more and more tired I  
could only answer 'yes' and 'no' and then I  
gave up because I was so exhausted  
that I was unable to speak. I think she  
thought I was sulking but she treated  
me as if she expected that sort of behav-  
iour from me and she left me alone very  
nicely but I felt that I wanted to cry out  
"I'm just so tired" but I could not do it.  
After all that effort I found that my face  
muscles seemed to suddenly smile  
involuntarily on their own. It happened  
straight away and I was highly  
embarrassed about it because it  
seemed so in-appropriate. It made  
the situation worse too because the  
physiotherapist saw it and seemed to  
think that it was a bad sign. When she  
had finished with the ward of women  
she told them to carry on with their exercises  
on their own especially if they went  
home before she came back again and  
then she turned to speak to the sister  
who had come back to my bed to hear  
what the physiotherapist had to say  
about me. She told the sister that I  
did have some weakness but she  
needed to see me walk and that she  
could not do it while I was so knocked  
out. The sister was all for getting me  
out of bed and trying to get me to  
walk up the ward there and then  
while they watched me but the Physio-  
therapist would not have it. She  
seemed very reluctant to give an opin-  
ion there and then and she told the  
sister so and said that she would  
see me again first before she made a

486 c. decision and she was reluctant to do it before the end of the week. The Sister said that I would not be there that long because the Doctors wanted me home that day or tomorrow but when the physiotherapist said that I could easily be brought back to the outpatient department later as there was no hurry, the Sister said that the Doctors had said that there was to be no further contact with the hospital for me as I was to be given back to the care of my G.P. When I heard her speak, revulsion rose in me at the thought of him having to touch me to examine me and I was determined not to go out of the hospital until my baby was back and we were together. The physiotherapist asked the Sister why I was so drugged and she asked her if they could have waited to give me something until after she had seen me. The Sister said that the Doctors had said I was to be given something before anyone saw me incase I was any trouble but the physiotherapist seemed to think that I would not be any trouble at all and she said to the Sister that she was very reluctant to get involved in this at all. The Sister said that they only wanted to know if I was capable of having the baby or not because it was a question of having a care order put on the child straight away. She told the physiotherapist that Great Ormond Street had asked for it, so the physiotherapist asked her if I wanted the baby and the Sister said yes that was the problem, I did want the baby but they did not think I should have it and they wanted to get the care order sorted out that day

487c. because it must be done as soon as possible before I got to the baby. The Sister told the physiotherapist that once a care order was put on the baby then Great Ormond Street could make their own decisions about the babys treatment without asking me or my family and they needed to be able to do that today. A sickening panic rose in me at the Sisters words but it died down again when the physiotherapist said quite firmly to the Sister that she could not assess me like that. She said that as far as she was concerned I had done everything she had asked me to but I was very weak and heavily sedated. She said that I had only just had a baby, and a difficult birth at that, and she said that it was difficult to tell how much weakness had come from that. She said that she could offer to see me later but there and then she would only say that she thought that with help I would manage the baby. The Sister said that if she had seen me walk she would not say that but the physiotherapist said that women in wheelchairs managed babies beautifully; It was whether I wanted the baby or not that mattered and if I did then I should be given all the help I needed. She said that she would need to see me with the baby to see how I could manage and if the baby was so desperately ill, premature, and in another hospital there was no hurry anyway. She seemed to think that I needed time to get back on my feet before she assessed me and she seemed dubious about the hurry and said to the Sister that it was to be expected that I would be weak for a bit. The Sister said that it was no use waiting because my Mother had told them that!

488c. was always like this and the hospital thought that if a care order was put on the baby then Great Ormond Street could stop me going up there before I caused any trouble. As I listened to them I thought that they could not act like that to get any order put on my baby if I had not done anything because I had been told that I could not have an order against Norman to stop him from coming near my baby and I until he had actually caused some trouble, so I thought that if I got to Great Ormond Street and showed them how gentle and capable I was with my baby then they would see at once that any doubts that anyone had about me and my baby were rubbish and that I was better able to be a parent than most people. If I had known then that they could stop me from seeing my baby when I had done absolutely nothing to warrant such an action, I would have gone absolutely mental that they could just take the baby away for no reason whatsoever and I could not understand how the situation had become so frightening so quickly when I had done absolutely nothing wrong at all. The physiotherapist made it clear that she was not able to assess me like that and she would only say that she thought I WOULD be alright. The sister seemed surprised that I might be alright and they went off in the direction of the office together still discussing the matter. With a lot of hope I firmly decided to be as capable as possible and do some more knitting so as to be doing something practical for my baby but this time I only managed to get round to thinking about the

489c. knitting as I was too exhausted to move. I found that I had slipped right down the bed with weakness and I could not seem to get myself up again. I had to stay there as my arms did not have the strength to lift my body up and even though I was not all that heavy, I just kept slipping down the pillows and my neck and head lay against the pillows at an awkward angle.

After some time the ward grew quiet as most of the mothers either went to the hospital shop or to the toilets for a smoke and I went to sleep for a bit. When I woke up again I saw the Sister and the Houseman coming round the ward and stopping at each bed so I sat myself up with tremendous effort and I found my hair brush and comb to tidy my hair so that I looked tidy to see the Doctor as he came round. I hoped he would have news of my baby and I was eager to talk to him and ask what was going on but to my astonishment he came up to the bed next to mine and then instead of coming to see me he crossed over to the bed opposite and carried on down the ward missing out the end four beds where I was in the ward. He seemed to be avoiding looking in my direction and asked the Sister if any of the other patients at the end of the ward needed seeing and when she said no, he looked relieved and indicating towards me he said that he was glad as he did not want to have to 'face her'. I was the only patient in that part of the ward just then as the others had gone off and I felt so alone and so awful that he could not face me and I wondered what on earth was going on. Terror struck me that maybe my baby had died and they could not tell me and I wanted to know what was going on. I desperately wanted

490c. to know with an agony that only a mother can know and no one would tell me and as I ached to know what was going on I felt a new sense begin to be born in me like dawn across the darkness of night and a picture that looked as if it was made of light came into my head and I 'saw' my baby in her incubator. She was dangerously ill but she was still alive and in that moment I knew that I would know before the Doctors told me if she did die because I would 'see' it, then 'see' and 'hear' the Doctors at Great Ormond Street telephone Lewisham Hospital and 'see' the Doctors at Lewisham Hospital receive the call and 'hear' their conversation. So that before the Doctor began his long walk up the ward to my bed I would already know what he was trying to work out in his mind about how to tell me as kindly as possible and I would go completely mad because it was such an awful feeling of suffering that I knew so much but that I could not work out how to tell anyone. I seemed to be able to see, hear and know everything that was going on but I could not explain it and the nearest chance I would have had was with Mr. Buckle when he had come round on the Saturday morning if he had listened to me tell him every word of his conversation with Dr. Galan but he was too quick for my slowness, and too full of what he knew himself to want to listen to me and the opportunity was lost. The more I was able to 'see', 'hear' and 'know' the less I was able to speak too which made me feel even more alone with it all and I just could not

491c. explain how I felt. After the Doctor had gone from the ward some of the patients came back from the shop and one of them was annoyed that she had missed the Doctor because she had wanted to go home and the sister had to get a message from the Doctor on the telephone that she could go home the next day.

One of the mothers who had come back to the ward had got a newspaper and she started reading bits out of it in excitement to the other patients about the Uri Geller articles. Some of the other patients started talking to her about it and one of them said that people were wondering if some prophecy in the bible had been fulfilled because on the Friday evening when Uri Geller had been on the television there had been a comet in the sky and people who had been looking for it in the sky had seen the moon and said that the moon looked red as if it was covered in streaks of blood and there was some prophecy in the bible that the moon would be turned to blood. She said that people were wondering about the fact that when Uri Geller had sent 'Britain Bending' the dials on a machine that a woman in labour had been wired up to had gone berserk, because there was some prophecy in the bible about a woman in labour but nobody could trace the woman. Then the woman across the ward who had been reading from her newspaper stared straight at me and said to the other patients "I wonder if its HER!, she had her baby on Friday night." The other patients looked a bit shocked and agreed with her. One of them said "If it is her then that's why nobody has traced her because she's knocked out like that." Some of the other patients said that if that had happened to me then perhaps that was why I was in the state that!

492c. was in, but one of the other patients said that I was always like that because she had heard the Sister say that my Mother had told her that I was. Some of the other patients said that they did not think much of what they had seen of my Mother or the rest of my family and they asked me if it was me who all that had happened to. I said I did not think so because although the dials on the machine that I had been wired up to had gone berserk and the Doctors had telephoned into that programme I still did not think that it could be me who anybody was looking for. The other mothers looked at each other as if they were certain that it was me but one of the mothers said that I looked too ill to be bothered with it all and so they just talked to me nicely for a few moments and then quietly left me alone.

At about ten o'clock babies were fed and changed and a very nice Sister and a senior nurse came round making some beds. They asked me if I would like to get up while they made my bed and so I went off to the bathroom as there was no chair to sit on because all the mothers nursing their babies needed them and there were not enough to go round. As I walked along I thought it was strange how my energy seemed to come back to me if I was roused to carry on and yet at times I was so weak that I could not move and I felt like a clock that carries on ticking when it is shaken even after it has broken. When I arrived at the bathroom one toilet was blocked and out of order and the other one was engaged. The toilet that was

493c. blocked was the one that I had been in the evening before and fear crept over me when I got back onto the ward and heard the Sister say that the plumber would have to be called in because I wondered if I knew why that toilet was blocked and an awful feeling of agony came over me about it all. I went down the ward to the bathroom where I washed my hands and face and came back. The Sister and the nurse were still making my bed because they had found that the sheets were covered in blood and so they had changed all the sheets. I had not realized it but I had been lying in a small pool of blood about twelve inches in diameter and when the Sister asked me if I was alright I just said yes and thanked her politely without stopping to think whether or not I really was alright. The Sister took me at my word and dropped the subject and I had no idea that she should have called a Doctor when she saw that much fresh blood. The Sister was more interested in what I had been doing and she asked me if I had just been out to the bathroom for a smoke. I told the Sister and the staff nurse that I had never ever smoked at all in my life and the Sister looked straight at me. Then she stopped making the bed and stared at me. She was staring at my face in alarm and so was the nurse. Then the Sister said to the nurse "Do you know I believe her!" and the nurse said "so do I". I did not know what was going on but the Sister and the nurse both seemed alarmed about what I had said as if there had been some awful mistake and they asked me very kindly if I minded 'for my own sake' if they searched my locker. I did not have

494C. the courage to ask them why they wanted to do it but I gladly let them. They searched every inch of my locker and my toilet things and clothes, and then the Sister told the staff nurse that there was nothing there. She said that there was not a cigarette in sight and no sign of any drugs whatsoever. They started talking earnestly about it and the Sister said to the nurse that it had got to be a mistake because at no time had I made any attempt to join the other smokers in the toilet and if I was such a heavy smoker then I would not have been able to go for so long without a smoke. She said that a very heavy smoker just could not do it and she said that although I was breathless and had a cough it was not what she would call a smokers cough. She said that she knew what heavy smokers were like and if I was one I would have been out of bed for a smoke at my first opportunity. The Sister stopped what she was saying to think for a moment and then as if an idea had come to her she asked me if I had given up smoking when I was pregnant and she told me very kindly that if I had done that then I was very clever to have managed it like that with no help at all. I felt really indignant at what she said but I did not let it show and I just firmly and politely told them both that I had never ever smoked and that only once when I was four years old I had taken one slight puff from a cigarette that my father had lit up for me and urged me to smoke. The Sister listened to me and then she furiously told the nurse "Its

495C. the Parents, not HER!" and she said that she was going to speak to the Doctors and sort all this out. She called to another nurse to take her place making the beds in the ward and she went off down the ward to the office. When she came back later she looked defeated and she said to the nurses that the Doctors had said that they had got to go by what my G.P. had said about me because he was the one who knew all about me and as Mr. Buckle, my consultant, was a personal friend of my G.P., my G.P. had told Mr. Buckle all about me. She said that apparently I had been a problem to him for years and so he wanted to deal with my case himself as he knew all about me. She said that the Doctors had checked and it was true that I had tried to make trouble during my pregnancy by reporting my G.P. to the Local Health Executive Council over nothing but that he was so forgiving about it all and that he thought it would be the best thing if I was sent home at once so that he could look after me himself. As she spoke I thought to myself that it sounded more like Dr. Galvan did not want anyone else to know what had gone on for years in our family but I did not say anything because I was so afraid that it might make things even worse for my baby and I. When the Sister finished telling the nurses what the Doctors had just told her she added that although it was not her place to argue with what the Doctors said, she said that she found it very difficult to accept what they said about me after having seen me for herself on the ward. She said that something was strange about the whole situation but it was not what the Doctors had said. She

496c said to the nurses that she was not in a position to say anything since it was my G.P. who knew me very well and the hospital did not and since my consultant and my G.P. were very good friends she could not go upsetting people but she did not like what was going on at all. The Sister spoke to the nurses quite openly in front of me as if she did not think I could understand anyway so it did not matter. I think it was because of the way I seemed to stare vacantly ahead of me or with my head bent down and I did not say anything but that was because of what I had been through in the labour ward and although I must have seemed rather 'vacant' I could understand every word that was said. When they had finished speaking the Sister and nurses were very kind and friendly towards me but it seemed as if they were almost apologetic that they could not do any more for me than make me comfortable in bed for the time being.

When they had gone I lay in bed grieving for my baby and I cried for a long time especially when I saw the other mothers feeding and holding their babies. They seemed to be so lucky and it hurt so much that the very precious gift of holding my treasured baby had been taken away from me. It seemed that I had never asked for much in life and yet so much had been snatched away from me that it did not seem possible that they could even have taken my very own baby too. Fate was so cruel and it did not seem possible that my baby could

497c. have been born sick instead of well. Things would only have had to have been the other way around, and my baby have been born well instead of sick and then everything would have been alright and we could have stayed together. My baby and I had so little that I realized that without our health we had nothing at all and that we might even loose each other. I had been so afraid that something would go wrong and that my baby and I would be separated, even if it was only for the first three nights when my baby was taken away to the nursery, but this was far, far worse than anything that I had been worried about and I felt as if I had spent months fighting a battle to stop us being parted like this and yet after all my efforts I had lost the battle. I was in despair but I was not defeated and I lay in bed desperately praying to God to save my child.

I cried quietly for a long time and a couple of the other mothers came over to speak to me kindly and see if they could do anything to help me. They told me that my baby would be alright but they said it a bit doubtfully as if they wondered if they were right to try to give me hope when they knew that my baby was so sick and so tiny that there was very little hope, but they were right to try to keep my hopes up because nothing is impossible when you believe in God and a time when there is no hope at all just does not exist because when you have lost everything else the one thing that comes through so strongly is hope. At least when the other mothers tried to give me hope I knew that they shared my hopes even if I was alone with my fears. One of the other mothers

498c. had seen my baby in the Special Care baby room because her baby was in the Premature Baby Unit in the next room and she said to me that the nurses had told her all about my babys lovely Christening and then as if she had suddenly had an idea she suggested that I could listen to the Sunday morning service on the radio because she knew how religious I was and she thought it might help me. The two mothers tried to find the right station on the radio headphones for me and they said that going to church helped at times like these and that it was when you are in trouble that you turn to God. I felt an awful agony of suffering that I wished that they knew just how much I loved God and that I turned to him all the time and not just when I was in trouble. The two mothers tried to tune the radio and they apologized to me when they could not find anything religious for me to listen to but they found Capital Radio which was playing pop music and they thought that might cheer me up if I listened to it. They popped the headphones onto my head and left me listening to it but as soon as I began to listen to the words I heard the man who was singing on the record that they were playing sing the words that he had lost his baby (meaning his girlfriend) and tears started running down my cheeks because I felt that I could not stand it because the music was so sad. I quickly took the headphones off my head and I found myself quite breathless with relief in the silence that followed once I had taken the headphones off.

499c. The two mothers who had helped me stood looking at me as if they were thinking that I was a bit ungrateful to have taken the headphones off me like that and I felt awful because I was torn between not offending them and of not being able to bear listening to such a sad song. I explained in tears that the man kept singing that he had 'lost his baby' and that it kept making me think of how ill my baby was. They quickly understood and said they were really sorry and put the headphones back on the wall hook. They really did not know what to do to help me and so they just told me very kindly that if I needed anything I only had to call them and they would come over. As they went back to their beds I heard one of them say to the other that I needed some proper attention and she thought it was wrong that the doctors did not come to me.

As I lay there I felt so tired in my body and so full of worry and the more tired my body became the more alert my mind became. My mind kept showing me crystal clear memories as if I was watching a film at the cinema of the horror that I had been through in labour. I was too weak to get up and do something that would take my mind off it but I had to do something so I reached across to my locker and got out the religious book that my mother had brought me the previous evening called 'God so loved the world' by Elizabeth Goodge. It was a really lovely tatty old paperback book that belonged to my mother and that I had read many times because I loved the beautiful way it told of Jesus being so human and such a friend to everyone. As I took hold of the book, to my great surprise, it opened itself at the

500c. story of Jesus when he was out in a boat on the Sea of Galilee with his disciples when a storm brewed up, and there on the page around one sentence of words was a kind of glowing electric blue light, the same as the kind of light that I could see around people. I tried to read the rest of the words on the page but although I knew what it was about none of the words made any sense to me, while the words "Peace, be still and know that I am GOD" that were encircled with blue light stood out so crystal clear that someone could actually have been speaking them. I could not think where I had heard that before or why it was so special to be called by that name but it sounded so familiar and I knew that for some reason it had mattered to me for a lot longer than just my own lifetime. As I read the words I could see a picture in my memory of Jesus standing in a boat dressed in white and framed against a stormy sky looking so human, friendly and strong and as I heard his gentle voice speak those words with such authority my heart felt as if it was breaking. The agony in my chest became too great to bear and so I put the book down on the bed because I could not bear to read another word and I lay there crying and unable to speak. My arms also seemed to become considerably weaker too and I was feeling very cold. With all my strength I tried to lift the bedcovers up to make myself warmer but I just could not do it because my fingers were