

60 i.c. and my mother planted herself back on her seat saying that she would have to stay now as it was only polite to stay and anyone would have thought that my Aunt and Cousin had come to see them and not me. My mother would not leave me alone with them as she always insisted on hearing what I said to anyone or what they said to me and my Father would not go either incase he missed anything.

Marion was beautifully and elegantly dressed and when she walked slowly and gracefully down the middle of the ward most of the people in the ward suddenly looked at her. The ward went quiet and then one woman broke the silence with a loud sigh of surprise and said "I thought that was Princess Margaret for a minute" and everyone agreed with her. Some members of our family do resemble members of the royal family in very many ways and my aunt could not help it as she always walked and looked like that and she just carried on as if no one had said anything about her because it was ladylike to do that. Even so, people seemed to be minding their conversation after that as if my aunt might be someone important and one woman patient told her husband that she wondered 'if I was somebody' because there was certainly something going on and I had been visited by the Dean of Lewisham and the press had come earlier! Her husband said that they would soon know when it came out in the papers but the woman said that I had refused to see them or let them take pictures.

My Father got my aunt and my cousin a chair and my aunt handed me a very large parcel wrapped in

602c. pink baby paper and said "congratulations!" very sweetly. She smiled at me and said in surprise "Well, where is she?" and then her warm smile dropped to a look of embarrassed shock when my eyes filled with tears and I said "She wasn't well, They had to take her away" and because I was trying not to cry I couldn't say anymore. My Aunt gave my mother a furious look as if my mother could have told her that and my mother said that she had meant to mention that on the phone but she had forgotten. My aunt looked at her as if it was a poor excuse and asked what was wrong with the baby. My mother replied "The same thing that Alfred died of, a blockage in the gut". I felt as if my mind was being pushed beyond what I could bear but outwardly I just stayed very calm and quiet while inside my heart and head all the hurt and suffering was building up to a point where it felt as if it was going to burst. My Aunt gently tried to take the parcel back from me saying "let me give this to you another time" but my hands held it fast and as best I could because I knew it was for my baby and I wanted to keep it, at which my Aunt smiled at me sweetly and told me what it was in case it upset me to see when I opened it. She said that if she had known the situation she could have bought me something for myself instead and I saw her close her lips tightly as if she was annoyed with my mother when she saw my shabby nightclothes. I said "no, not at all" because I was more glad to have something for the

603c baby than for myself. My Aunt helped me to unwrap the large box and open it to see the most beautiful pink broderie anglaise pram set that she must have gone straight out and bought me as soon as she heard that I had had a baby girl. I thanked her profusely and was genuinely pleased as not only was it a lovely present and so unexpected but my aunt was the only person who had shown any sign of recognizing that I had had a baby at all.

My Aunt asked me how the baby was and what was going on but I was of little help in talking about it. She seemed to have difficulty understanding what I was saying and so my mother quickly took over the conversation. Within moments they were both discussing what Alfred had died of and I just lay there unable to believe my ears. I needed peace and quiet and to rest but there was noise everywhere. My cousin chatted to my sister, my father talked to my brother and right beside me my Aunt and my mother talked for over half an hour about Alfred's black-age, his sudden death when he had been overfed with milk and then in great detail about what his post mortem had found. I felt myself getting weaker and weaker as if I was being forced to go on and on, and still they kept talking and the noise seemed to get louder and louder. At some stage my brother was sent off to get some tissues for me which my father paid for and the words 'nervous breakdown' were whispered by everyone as they all stared at me in turn while pretending not to be staring and then carried on their conversation. Finally before the end of visiting time they all had a row. My father had said that he would

604c. put everybody in the back of his van
and drove them all over to Bromley
to give my Aunt and my Cousin a
lift home, and he said that they
could all spend half an hour there
and then he could drive my Mother,
brother and sister back home. My
Mother said that she would have none
of it and she said that she was not
going all the way over to Bromley in the
back of his van as she had been out
all day and had had enough of his
driving for one day and she wanted
to get home and see to her dogs. My
father got really annoyed and
told her that she would do as he
said and that they had got to stick
together now, hadn't they? My
mother did not like being threatened
and said "No, I haven't, I can have
care of that baby without your
help" and with that a full scale row
broke out with them shouting at each
other across my bed and with every
patient and visitor in the whole
ward looking at them. I was crying
because I was terrified of the row
and I did not want them fighting
at home if I was not there to
break it up or see that my brother
and sister were alright. I knew
that my father could physically
hurt my mother and I felt shocked
that they could suddenly row so
loudly in the ward. I said "Don't
fight" in alarm and both my parents
looked at me in surprise as if
they had not expected me to be
upset as I was used to them fighting.
There was not a nurse on the ward
and when one patient told her husband
to get one from the office, my mother
came over to me and in a big show
of affection she put her arm around
me and called me 'love' as she told

605C. me not to be upset. I got my mother to let me go and I saw her smiling around the ward at the patients and visitors as if she was trying to let people see how nice she was to me. I suggested that my father took my Aunt and Cousin Katherine home and that my mother, brother and sister could make their own way home, which was the most sensible thing to do but my father flew at me in a temper, terrifying me and saying "You shut your mouth girl, this is none of your business, don't you start trying to organize us!" I was crying and shivering and a man got up from visiting another patient in a bed across the ward and ignoring my parents he came over and asked me if I was alright as if he would have stopped my father from doing that to me. I nodded 'yes' to him although I was not really alright. My father was shifting about nervously and he told the man that I was alright and that I had just been cheeky and had needed checking, but he spoke about me as if I was a dog who he had just pulled in on a choke chain and the man ignored him. I assured the man that I was alright for the sake of peace with my family and when he had gone back to the patient that he was visiting my family started packing up their things ready to go but people were still looking at them.

My mother took the parcel that I had just been given saying that she was taking it "incase it got pinched". My Aunt suggested that I might like to keep it to have it with me and look at, but my mother was firm and not wanting a row over that as well, I let her take it. My father rubbed his

606c. hands together and said provocatively "Well, all in the van now?" as he smiled sarcastically at my mother as if he was trying to see if she would do what he wanted or have another row. My mother said hastily "We are going on our own". Then the row broke out again and I said "Don't row" and my family told me to be quiet, and they all started to leave as if they all wanted to get off the ward so that they could have a really good row outside and say what they wanted to. As they went my mother said "Now don't cry because I can't go if I know you are unhappy" and my father threatened me saying "And you are to keep your mouth shut because you are in no position to be opening your mouth now" as if I was in some kind of trouble and he was threatening me to keep my mouth shut.

They went off and after they had all gone I could hear other patients telling each other and their visitors that it was a shame because I had no husband, my baby was seriously ill with little hope and then my family went and treated me like that. The bell went for the end of visiting time and as several visitors passed my bed they smiled at me and very kindly told me to cheer up especially the man who had come over to see if I was alright. I smiled back and wished so much that I had a loving family and visitors like the other patients had.

As the ward cleared about five nurses came up to my bed. One of them was a staff nurse and she was telling the other nurses, "Now remember, look for a blighted one!"

607C. The nurses had brought some vases for flowers and they came round to my bed straight away smiling cheerfully. The Staff nurse asked me cheerfully "Shall we do your flowers for you?" but I just thanked them politely and said that it was alright because I had not got any. The Staff nurse and the nurses looked and saw that I really had not got anything at all and the Staff nurse said "That's disgusting, all those visitors have come to see her and she has not got any flowers or cards from them." She asked me why my father had not gone out to get me some flowers when they had asked them to in the office and sent a nurse to remind them. I said that it was alright because I did not want any. The Staff nurse told the nurses that it was not the point and she was cross but not with me. Some of the other mothers asked if they could have the vases that the nurses had brought if I did not need them and they asked the nurses what was going on. The Staff nurse told two of the mothers that my parents had been asked by the doctors what was the best way to tell me about my baby and that they had told the Doctors that the news should be held back from me as long as possible and that I was only to be told anything by the Doctors if my parents were present because I was terrified of them. My father had told them that if I was to be got ready to be told then they could come up to me with a blighted flower in a vase and cut it off as if that was the best thing to do with such a flower before I was told that my babys deformity had been 'cut'. Then she told them

608c that it was embarrassing because I had not even GOT any flowers and even the doctors had said that I should be told straight away without any of these 'play therapy' games. Everyone seemed very quiet about it and the patients told the nurses that my family had been very cruel to me during visiting time. The staff nurse said that she was going back to the office to tell them and she went off. I wondered what on earth was going on and I felt afraid. I knew that if my father had told them to do that to me then he must be trying to drive me mental because it would remind me of what his homosexual friend had done to me with a blighted flower when I was twelve years old.

As soon as they had gone I got out of bed by myself, collected my washing things from the top of my locker and struggled to walk out to the bathroom. I was very upset and I needed to be alone even if the only place I could find to be alone was the bathroom. There was a washing cubicle, screened by a plastic curtain so I stood in there by myself and quietly cried and cried. A nurse came in after a while and she quickly asked me what the matter was and why I was crying. I said that I was alright and she asked if she could search my toilet bag which I let her. She asked me if I had anything sharp on me and I said no and was quite bewildered that she could think that I was going to commit suicide or something.

609c. When she had searched it and found nothing she asked me if my visitors had brought me any drugs in. I said no and I was really bewildered, but she believed me. She asked me why I had come into the toilets to cry and I said that I did not want to cry on the ward with everyone looking at me. She asked me if I wanted to go home and I said no, so she asked me "why ever not because you would be with your family?" I said that I wanted to stay in and that the doctors were coming to tell me what was wrong with my baby. She asked if I was worried about the baby and I said "Yes of course I am". Seeing that I meant it she became kinder towards me and said half to herself "Well, it's never too late to be sorry". I felt like saying "Sorry for WHAT?" because she was yet another person who had spoken to me as if what had happened to my baby was my fault, but I did not say anything. She told me to come out of there and that she would see me back to bed. I said that I just wanted to wash my face and so she waited for me and then saw me back to my bed. Several of the other patients were concerned about me and it had been Mrs. Carter in the next bed to mine who had got one of the nurses to go after me when she had seen me go off to the bathroom so upset. I got back into bed and two other nurses came up to my bed as well and said that my mother was on the telephone. They asked me how I was because they said that my mother was asking if I was alright because I had been upset during visiting time. They knew nothing about that but they said that it was alright with them if my mother came

B10c. back and sat with me because she was asking if she could incase the Doctors came to see me. They asked me if I wanted her to come back and I got so anxious because I had only just got her to go and I needed peace and quiet. I did not want her coming back and I said so, and I was in quite a state because I wanted to go to sleep and I did not want my mother sitting beside me while I slept. The nurses looked at each other and they seemed puzzled as to why I was supposed to be so dependant on my mother and yet I was so afraid of her and did not want her near me. Some of the other patients had come over to my bed, especially the girl whose visitor had asked me if I was alright, and Mrs. Carter in the next bed, and where I could not talk because I was so upset they told the nurses furiously that far from it being me who had got upset during visiting time it was my visitors who had upset me. They said that all those visitors had come but they had sat and talked to each other and hardly said a word to me. Then they had all had a row and it was the arguing and my father telling me off that had upset me. The nurses asked what the row was about and one of the patients said it was over who was going home with who as if she was disgusted with them and all the patients told the nurses that they had thought there was going to be a fight between my family right there in the ward. The nurses said that

611c it had been noticed that I had no flowers or cards, and one of the patients said that I had been given a pram set because she had seen it, a pink one, but that my mother had even taken that away from me. One of the nurses checked with me that I definitely did not want my mother to come back and when I said 'no', she went off to tell my mother that I was alright, as she was still on the telephone. The nurses were kindness itself and made sure that I was comfortable in the bed. They told me that the night nurses would give me something to help me sleep but that they could not give it to me too soon or I would not sleep. The nurse who had come to find me in the toilets said to the other one that I was under the impression that the doctors were coming to see me about my baby and she told her that I obviously wanted to know how my baby was. The other nurse just looked embarrassed and after seeing that I was alright they went back to the office.

Some of the other mothers were going to watch T.V. in the sitting room of another maternity ward and I wondered how on earth they could leave their babies to go and watch T.V., I knew that if I had mine with me I would be so full of joy that I would rather sit and look at her than watch TV because I knew that I would not be able to take my eyes off my baby. One of the other mothers said that her sister in law was in the other ward after having had her baby within a few days of her having her baby. She said that her sister in law had completely rejected her perfectly normal baby and was ignoring it so that the

612c. nurses were having to feed it. She said that it made her sick that her sister in law could do that for no reason when I was lying there crying for my baby that was sick. She told the other mothers that she bet I would idolize my baby if I had her there and I knew she was right. I felt sorry for the sister in law as she probably had reasons for how she felt that she probably could not show in any other way and she needed sympathy and understanding but I knew what the woman meant that you should be really grateful for a healthy baby when you have one. Many of the other mothers said that they had counted their blessings when they had seen how upset I was. As one mother said, "When you are expecting a baby you worry about if your baby will be alright but you do not really expect it not to be". They finally went off to watch TV and I lay there peacefully alone in the ward apart from the babies in their cots but I ached and ached to hold my own little girl and prayed that she was alright and not in pain.

A while later the mothers came back and fed their babies and settled down for the night and the nurses brought the drug trolley round. I said 'no' to sleeping tablets but they still left them beside my bed telling me to take them but I really knew better than to take them and as soon as they had gone I put them in the paper

613c. rubbish bag on my locker. The lights finally dimmed and with the curtains drawn most of the way around my bed I settled down, feeling very ill and sick with worry, to spend another night in quiet contemplation. I was glad to be alone and to have the privacy of the curtains around my bed and I began with a really good long quiet cry which was something that I could not do except when I was alone. If it had not been for the chance to be alone and cry; and to let the drugs wear off and clear my head I think I would have gone entirely mental as my head just had to have some rest.

I prayed and prayed about my baby as I lay there and I put everything into God's hands and prayed to him with all my might. The picture of Elizabeth started itself on and I saw her struggling to breathe and the Doctors patiently watching over her in her incubator. I knew from what I saw that it was going to be a long night for them and while I was watching it all and feeling so full of anxiety I prayed and prayed for them all. In the act of turning everything into prayer I knew that the terrible suffering and anxiety I was feeling was filling my prayers full of power and it was as if some mystical instrument out in space and eternity was rebounding my prayers directly at my baby like a satellite directing a very strong beam of light directly at my baby. As I watched the scene around my baby's incubator in Great Ormond Street with the light on in her room burning long into the dark night, I saw a change in the picture I saw.

614c. My baby was struggling to hang onto life but around her was a protective force like a kind of energy that was coming from my prayers and keeping evil at bay. I saw the tension of the doctors relax too and even though I was not able to be by my baby's side and be part of the team trying to save her I could still see what was going on (never mind what the nurses were trying to keep from me) and I could still do my part and pray and protect her with my prayers. Looking at it like that I realized that it was probably the one thing that the rest of the team could not do for her. There was one thing that I could not alter and that was that I had no power to say whether or not she would live or die and knowing that decision was beyond me was an unbearable agony.

After praying for a very long time my prayers reached the stage where I could see straight into heaven. It was a strange experience like actually being able to see into two worlds at once. I could see into Great Ormond Street and see the scene around my baby and I could see way above that out into space to the scene in heaven. I saw God on his throne, silent and anxious and I saw every angel, archangel, and the whole company of heaven standing still, silently and anxiously waiting. What I could not understand was why the whole of heaven had stood still over one sick baby, precious

615c enough as she was, but when there were thousands and thousands of sick children all over the world. Gently and slowly my soul left my body and rose up so that I was above the ward I was in, looking down at myself lying in my hospital bed and also looking down into Great Ormond Street at my baby in her incubator. Slowly I rose higher and I saw the two pictures from more of a distance but still clearly visible in every smallest detail and then I found that I was standing on the left side of God with Jesus on his right hand side, standing amongst the company of heaven. Then just God and I were alone surrounded by light and the rest of heaven faded into dimness because seeing God was like looking around a room indoors after having just come in from bright sunlight. God talked to me on our own and put his left arm around my waist as he talked. He gave me to understand that it was important to the whole world that my baby pull through tonight and that we must only wait and watch but I did not seem to understand it all. As he sat back in his throne he let me see how my agony of watching my child suffer was the same as he had gone through watching his son die on the cross and he said with deep concern that you could only 'wait and watch'. His eyes had never left his son on his cross and only for moments as he turned to talk to me and ease my agony did he take his eyes off my baby either. He tried to show me what desperate courage and bravery it took to sit and watch. He said that he must not interfere as it was important to the whole world that we had to stand and watch. He said he had to let this happen because it was most terribly

616c. important and he said that there was going to be no easy way out for me either. He said that I had to feel every pain and worry that came to me as acutely as possible. He said that any other child and any other mother and he could have saved us, but this had to happen.

I could not match Gods courage or his compassion as his eyes never left my baby. He was so steadfast and brave and he just seemed to do exactly what he was supposed to do and he never wavered from it. Even though he was right beside me it was still agonizing for me and I still felt absolute grief at the uncertainty of whether or not she would live. Without any feeling of failure I slowly sank back into my bed and lay there concentrating on my prayers. The picture of Great Ormond Street had switched itself off but I could still see God in heaven above me and he could most certainly see me. Then as if there was little that he could offer me in comfort that night he gave me something to take my mind off what was going on. He told me to look at the stars in the sky of Earth and looking up out of the window and searching the sky for stars like a child looking through its toy box for its best marbles, I found them. The sky was full of them, hundreds of them. I found that I could see them many times more clearly than on any other night and in seeing them more clearly they seemed to come closer to the earth. I had always loved the stars so dearly and now it seemed that they loved me as much as I loved them.

617c . and in just the same way. Beaming
and twinkling they showed their love
and kindness towards me. I was fully
conscious and awake in the ward and
yet from my hospital bed even the stars
came closer as I watched them through
the window. They seemed ten times their
normal size as I saw them even more
clearly. I saw that instead of the
stars being made of the white light
that we see when looking at them from
a distance on earth they were each a
different colour when I saw them closer,
as if each one was actually a coloured
rock. There were red, green, blue and
yellow ones like each of the colours
that the Principalities had worn and
about a dozen of them twinkled, spun
and pirouetted in the night sky as
if they were performing a beautiful
ballet. It was as if they were actually
putting on a performance to take my
mind off the terrible worries that I
had. As they moved it looked as if each
star was like a rock that was shaping
itself into a precious stone each
time it turned. When they were the
right octagonal shape they all
seemed to come together into a ring
that was held together by gold light
until I realized that I was looking
at the most majestic crown that I had
ever seen. Then I saw two other crowns
each exactly the same as the one I
was looking at. They were three large
sovereigns crowns and one of the
crowns was older than the other one
but they were both as new as the day
that they had been made and the
third one that I was looking at had
just been made. They were so maj-
estic and yet as I looked at them they
looked so humble as if they had
only been made from stones that
had been found by digging around in

618c. the earth, like the good deeds that Jesus had done when he had come to earth and it was the fact that those stones had been found and shaped into something so good that made the crowns so precious and so splendid and yet so simple. They were the most beautiful crowns that I had ever seen yet as they certainly were not lined with Ergine or anything as cruel as that they were the heaviest and most painfully difficult crowns to wear that had ever been made. I looked at them for ages and at last a feeling of peace, courage and hope that my baby would pull through, came over me and I fell asleep looking at those beautiful stars. It was not a drugged sleep that I went into and in the couple of hours that were left until the morning I slept so well that I awoke so totally refreshed that I felt as if I had been on a weeks holiday.

I woke up as the Sister drew back the curtains from around my bed and took the thermometer from on the wall behind my bed ready to put it into my mouth. I said "Good morning" to her brightly and asked her if she knew how my baby was. She replied that there was no news as if that was all that she was going to tell me even if there was any news, so I asked her very nicely when the Doctors were coming to see me to tell me how my baby was and what was wrong with her. It was the same sister who had been on duty the day before and who had told me that the Doctors would come and talk to me but she seemed annoyed about it when I asked for them and she asked me

619c why I was so anxious to know. It was obvious that she knew exactly how my baby was and so did the rest of the staff but no one wanted me to know. I wondered if my baby had already died and they were just not telling me. I said to her "Has my baby died and you can't tell me?" She looked shocked and asked me if I had taken my sleeping tablets. I lied and said 'yes' and she said that I had not or I would have woken up drowsy. She seemed annoyed that I was clear of the drugs that they had given me and that I could speak up for myself and I felt hurt that they could knowingly give me something that could make me wake up in discomfort. I told the Sister that I never took drugs of any kind and that I did not need them. I told her that I did not want to take drugs that I did not need but she said that it was probably the trouble with me that I took the wrong kind of drugs and I would do better to take the drugs that my doctor prescribed for me. I said that my G.P. had never prescribed drugs for me at all but the Sister said that it was no good saying that. She said that they knew all about me as they had spoken to my parents about me, and to my G.P., and so I couldn't pull the wool over their eyes about that. Then she wouldn't talk to me and she just went off and got some yellow tablets from the drug trolley. When she came back to my bed she was really annoyed and she threatened me to take the tablets by saying that if I wanted to see the doctors about my baby then I was to take the tablets first. My hopes sank that the staff could threaten me about not telling me how my baby was unless I took the tablets and so I took them. I was too ill to argue and too desperate to know how my baby was to put up

620c any kind of verbal fight. As I lay there I kept thinking that I could not understand how it was that as soon as I tried to recover the staff knocked me down again with drugs. I only wanted to pull myself together so that I could get myself, my baby and the whole situation sorted out. I could not do it while I was so sleepy and it was an awful suffering to have my body made so weak and my mind made so alert and not to be able to talk to anyone about what was worrying me. I heard the Sister go along to the night nurses who were still on duty and tell them off. She said that if necessary I was to be woken up at 2am and given extra sedation by injection if necessary. She said that the drugs that I had been given had worn off in the night and she told them that if I got up I would get myself ready and go to Great Ormond Street and that Great Ormond Street did not want me to go up there at all. She said that the Doctors had given strict instructions that I was to be kept heavily sedated for as long as possible and certainly for the whole time that I was in hospital or there was no telling what might happen and they had other mothers and newborn babies to think of. She sounded as if she was genuinely afraid that I might attack someone or do something like that and I was really mystified because even if they were missing me up with my mothers eccentricity even she would not do that and it seemed impossible that the Sister could be talking about me like that.

The tablets that I had been given

621c. soon worked and after some minutes I began to feel my willpower fail me and a feeling of submissiveness take over. When the breakfast came round I did not eat much as I seemed to have lost any inclination to eat. As the morning wore on the ward was cleaned, the babies were bathed and later some of the mothers complained to the nurses that none of the doctors had come round yet and that they wanted to see the doctor to see when they would be allowed home. The nurses said that the doctors were keeping off the ward incase they frightened me because I was terrified of them, and I did not like the nurses telling that to the other patients when it was not even true, but even though I heard the nurses say that the doctors were not likely to come, I still lay there waiting for them to come and tell me what was wrong with my baby because I just could not think in terms of that they might not come. All the time I waited for the doctors to come I watched everything that was going on in the ward and listened to what people were saying to each other but no one spoke to me and as I waited for the doctors to come and see me about my baby, every minute seemed to stretch longer and longer as I waited and waited and they still did not come.

When most of the babies had been seen to, the nurses came round to make the beds and I waited for them to reach my bed so that I could have an opportunity to talk to them while they were making my bed like they were doing to the other mothers, but when they got to my bed they just passed right round it and carried on to go and make the next bed. I thought that they would come back

622C. to do my bed but they didn't, they just left it and they did not even look at me as they walked past me. Later a Domestic came round changing everyone's water jug which had not been done earlier but even she made no attempt to come anywhere near my bed and she just left my jug where it was while she changed every other jug in the ward. I wondered why they had left me out but I dared not ask incase anyone thought I was complaining when I wouldn't have meant it like that.

Later the Sister came up to my bed and said that Great Ormond Street Hospital had been on the telephone and had asked if I could get my relatives and friends to stop telephoning Great Ormond Street about my baby. She said that Great Ormond Street had complained that the telephone had not stopped ringing with queries about my baby and the staff there could not keep up with it because it was jamming the lines. She said that Great Ormond Street had said that they had answered all the queries so far but if I agreed then they would only in future answer queries from my parents and no one else including the ward that I was on in Lewisham Hospital for me because they were too busy to deal with it. The Sister said that the ward I was on were more than happy with that and to leave it to my parents to tell me how my baby was. I was furious but I kept my temper even though I could feel myself beginning to panic. I said that it could not be my family or friends telephoning

623c. Great Ormond Street as my relatives would not do it and I had no friends whatsoever. I knew that my Grandmother and my Aunts would never dare to move in front of my Mother and telephone Great Ormond Street themselves because they were too polite and discreet to do that and they would just have politely inquired from me or my mother to find out how things were progressing. They would never have 'pried', as they were just not like that at all. There was no one else who had any right to telephone Great Ormond Street Hospital for any information at all and I told the Sister that. I said that I wanted Great Ormond Street to only pass information to me and to no one else, especially not my parents. I said that I wanted to be told by the staff on the ward how my baby was and then I could tell my parents if I wanted to. I said that any information was to come to me first hand and not to my parents as my baby was mine and I had a right to be the first to know anything about her and to be the one to tell other people. The Sister looked really sheepish as if she thought it was a bit late for me to say that because too much had gone on already, and also that she had not expected me to be able to speak up for myself like that. I hardly knew where my own voice came from and I just seemed to get some kind of inner energy to say it even though I was so sedated. I said that no one was to be given any information over the telephone from outside the hospital and the Sister looked a bit worried as if it was too late for that but she said she would see what she could do. I said that there was no relative or friend to

624c. ask for information as I just did
not have anyone to telephone. She said
that it was the newspapers and
the baby's father and his relatives,
and my mind went silently hyster-
ical. I told her desperately that
I had arrangements for an injunct-
ion against him coming near me
or my baby and that he was not
to be allowed to see the baby at
Great Ormond Street. I said in
a panic that he was not even
supposed to know that the baby
had been born yet and I said
that we had no intention of
telling him anything at all. Then
the Sister looked really alarmed
as if something had already
happened about that and she
seemed sorry when she saw what
a panic I was getting into. She
asked me if I would like her to
telephone for my parents to come
in and explain to me what was
wrong with my baby. I said no
and that when the Doctors had
told me then I would speak to my
parents and tell them myself.
The Sister said that the Doctors
were busy and she tried to
make out that if I asked to
speak to them I was depriving the
other patients who did have
babies of the Doctors time. She
said that I did not want to do
that did I? so I said no, and I
said that I would wait until
they were free but the Sister
looked desperate as if she was
trying to get me to let my parents
come but that was not what
I wanted so she said that she
would see if she could get the
Doctors for me after all and she
went off.

625c. I waited and waited for her to come back and I tried to push the terror that Norman and his family had already been told about my baby, to the back of my mind and I just tried to hope that my baby was alright and that the Doctors would come soon. I waited for anyone at all to come along: for the Sister to come back, for the doctors to turn up, for a nurse to come to my bed or even for a domestic to dust my locker so that I could have an excuse to talk to anyone at all but the nurses went around the ward and the domestics did their work but they just went straight past my bed or missed me out of what they were doing as they went round the ward as if they had been told to do that. Later I got up and went to wash but when I came back to my bed I found that in the five minutes that I had been outside and hurried back, my bed had been stripped and changed with clean sheets, a fresh jug of water had been left on my locker, the rubbish bag had been changed and everything had been left tidy. It seemed awful that after all the time I had waited for the nurses to come to my bed, they had been seen to everything and gone while I had been in the bathroom for such a short time, and not only did I feel desolate that I had missed the chance to talk to someone but I was surprised at how quickly they had done it. It had taken the nurses and domestics all morning to do all that amount of work in the ward and I wondered why they couldn't have done my bed and everything at the same time as everyone else's instead of so quickly while I wasn't there. When I looked in my locker to put my washing things away I

626C found that half a dozen sanitary towels had been put into my locker by the nurses. They were only very grudgingly giving one at a time to patients who asked them for them and I had heard the nurses telling the patients sternly to provide their own. I had my own and I did not need any but some had been put into my locker and it just seemed as if everything I could possibly need had been provided so that I had no need to approach the nurses to ask for anything at all. It seemed as if everything had been done so that I was properly looked after but no one had come near me or spoken to me personally and a choking feeling came over me that it felt as if I had been sent to Coventry or something. One of the mothers came back to her bed from the bathroom at the other end of the ward and two of the other mothers joked with her that she had missed something and all the other patients laughed together as one of them went on to tell her that she should have been there a few minutes before and seen the nurses dashing about. They had all had to see to my bed and every thing while I had gone out to the toilet because they had been told to and so all the nurses had been moving about like lightning to get my bed changed and do my locker because they had only got a few minutes to do it in. They told her that there had been nurses running about all over the place to get the linen and put the skips back quickly and be gone before I came back, and they laughed at how fast the domestic had moved as if it was a joke about

627C. the domestics not doing anything quickly but the nurses had frightened the coloured domestic about how dangerous I was and she had been scared stiff and had done the job and been gone quicker than the nurses. The patient said that the Sister had laughed that she did not know what they would do if I came straight back from the toilet and the patients had thought it was funny too. As I stood by my bed putting my washing things away and pretending that I was not listening to what they were saying I felt so alone and afraid as if I just could not believe it was all happening to me. Two more yellow tablets had been left in a little plastic pot on my locker and one of the patients told me that the nurses had told them to tell me that I had got to take them. I hoped that it meant that the doctors were coming to see me and so I took the tablets as I was told to. The other patients were all watching me and a couple of them came to the end of my bed to talk to me nicely as if they did not really like laughing at me. I tried to hold a conversation with them but my nerves were in such a state that I seemed to talk very incoherently and ramble on as if once I was given the chance to talk I couldn't stop myself and didn't know where to finish a sentence. I knew what I was talking about but I couldn't get the words out clearly. One of the other patients in the ward said to a couple of others "You can hear that there is something the matter with her in her voice" as if that was what was 'funny' about me but they all seemed to feel sorry for me because it was not said nastily and they all listened to me trying to talk to them as if they were being ever so polite to me about it, which I was grateful for.

Q28C. I got into bed much weaker than I had got out of it to go to the bathroom and it was the worry of what had just happened about the nurses avoiding me rather than the walk to the bathroom that had exhausted me. I lay in bed feeling ill with worry, worn out by life and wondering why on earth it was all happening to me.

A plumber came along to see to the blocked toilet and he was shown where it was by a staff nurse. I thought of my baby boy in there but I felt safe that no one would find him because I could not bear other people to touch him even though he was dead, or to take him away. I felt safe that by now he was far away in the sewers and possibly even far out at sea but after about ten minutes the plumber came out of the bathroom and got the staff nurse. He looked absolutely ill and he took the staff nurse back into the toilet to show her something. There were some loud exclamations of horror from the staff nurse in there and then she came out and got several other nurses to get a bedpan and some gloves from the sluice and to bring them to the toilets. They got the things and went in there and then there was some commotion as they were obviously retrieving something from the toilets. Then two of the nurses took the bedpan back to the sluice, One of them was carrying it ever so carefully and they were both staring into the pan and looking really sorry at what they were looking at. They carried it past my bed as they went to the sluice and my mind silently screamed in torment as I

629C. quietly lay there because I knew that they had my baby boy in that bedpan. There was a lot of fuss over the plumber as the staff nurse apologized to him and said that she had not known he would find that, and the other nurses offered him the kitchen to sit down in for a while because he looked shocked and they offered to make him a cup of tea. He said that he was alright and that he had just not expected to find that in there. Then he went back into the toilet, cleared up his tools and left the ward. The Doctors were called and arrived on the ward in a state of agitation asking the nurses where the baby was that had been found in the toilets. Mr. Sunstone the Registrar gave me a filthy look and then looked around at all the cots quickly and asked which mothers baby it was who had been taken out there as if he was saying that he guessed straight away that I had taken one of the other mothers babies and left it in the toilets but they all calmed down when the staff nurse told them that the plumber had found a foetus down the toilet, not a newborn baby in the toilets and that it could have been from any of the mothers, even one who had been discharged home. The Doctors went into the sluice and I felt awful because I knew that they were looking at my baby and I just hoped to God that they were being gentle with him but I felt frozen with terror and completely unable to do anything. Then the staff nurse came out of the sluice and asked one of the nurses on the ward to get a box and a scalpel from the clinical store and I silently screamed in my mind as they were going to cut him up and I knew it. The staff nurse asked if any of the other nurses wanted to watch and I silently thought it was awful because

630C. I could not bear a whole crowd of people gathering round to watch it as it was so terribly, terribly hideous. When everyone had gone into the sluice and the nurse had taken everything in for the waiting doctors I felt every agony of that knife cutting through my dead child. Despite the closed door between them and I, my mind switched itself on so that I could see through the wall between the sluice and the ward I was in and I could see everything that was going on and everything nobody expected me to be able to see. I felt as if I was going completely mental as I watched them dissect my son and after they had finished the nurses just flushed him down the sluice from what I could see. That was the very worst part of it all, somehow when I had done it I had not known what I was doing and even when I had stood in the toilets staring at the wall I don't think I had even realized that I was staring at the wall because I didn't seem to see anything at all there but the Doctors and nurses knew what they were doing and they should have called a priest to give him the last rites because he was all that was left of a living being. I felt sick, frozen, with fear and unable to do anything at all, All I had left was my Elisabeth and suddenly she seemed more precious than ever. Some of the Doctors came out of the sluice and then the nurses after they had tidied up and then the Registrar came out looking worried as if he was in some sort of trouble himself over all that had happened. He did not look at me at all but the Houseman and Sister who came out last of all

631C. stared straight at me. I was staring at them and at the white tupperware box that the Houseman was carrying as carefully as the nurses had carried the bedpan. The Houseman was staring at me and he said to the Sister "I know whose it was" and the Sister did not take her eyes off me as she said "so do I". They stood there talking and the Houseman said to the Sister that the baby could not have lived because it was only a foetus but it was the fact that I had not told anybody that worried him. He said that there was no way that I could not have known what had happened to me and he said that he wondered if I felt that I was in too much trouble already to be able to tell anybody and they both seemed worried about it. He said that there was no doubt that I knew and he said to the Sister "just look at the look on her face, it was hers alright" but he said it very gently and kindly as if he felt sorry for me. The Sister was still staring at me and she said to the houseman that she agreed with him and they both looked at me staring at them in horror. The Houseman said to the Sister that "It ought to go to Great Ormond Street, but then Great Ormond Street would want to know why shes been walking around all this time when she should still have been in the labour ward, and too many questions will be asked." He spoke as if he was genuinely sorry for me and as if he did not know what he really ought to do. I had expected them to come over and speak to me as I had been waiting so long for the Doctor to come and tell me what was the matter with my baby but they only stood there talking about me and

632c. although they were staring at me they did not come over and actually speak to me. The Houseman finished by saying that they could not even mention it to me as it would only worry me further and the Sister agreed with him. They just went off talking together and I wondered why they could not talk to me, I knew I was worried but what they were doing was worrying me even more. Despite all that, I still lay there waiting for the Doctors to come and tell me what was wrong with my baby but all the time I was waiting worries were building up and up in my mind as to why they would not speak to me or tell me. I knew that they knew what was wrong with my baby as the Sister had told me that they did, and it was tormenting me for people to be walking around knowing what was wrong and for nobody to come and tell me or even speak to me. The worry of that was all too much and I was really upset. I tried to 'think' to get my brain to find out what was wrong if no one would tell me but all that came into my mind was a medical picture of Elizabeth's Uterus and Vagina but only part of that, as if the middle of it was blocked. I had thought when I had first seen her that something was wrong in that area but looking at the picture I could see in my mind now I got the impression that that was something simple. As hard as I tried I could not find the two things that the Sister had spoken of that were as serious as she had said. It seemed too much to bear that there were staff walking about in the ward who

633c. could tell me what was wrong because they knew and yet even though I was the baby's mother no one even spoke to me. It did not matter to me what was wrong with my baby, I could face anything or cope with anything, it was being made to wait to know for no particular reason that was wearing my nerves down and using up what little energy I had, by tiring me out mentally. I was now in agony of mind over my baby boy as well. If they had got him out of that toilet which I had never expected them to do, I thought that he ought to be properly buried. He was a human being however tiny he was and I wanted Father Nolan to baptize him and say the prayers for the dead for him. I was not sure whether it was him that they had flushed down the sluce when they had tidied up or if he was what was in the white box that the Houseman had, or if part of him was in the box and part of him had been flushed down the sluce. I seemed to think that he was in the white box and the terror of what they were going to do with him was just too much to bear and then my mind just suddenly switched off all the worry I had about that. In a matter of seconds my mind just became blank of all memory of my son, just suddenly and quite violently there was just a black cloud in my mind where that memory should have been and I lay there staring at it in my mind and puzzling over why I had been feeling so worried. Then I started to feel calmer and as if everything was alright and there was nothing to be worried about.

Later the Sister came and asked me if I had managed to wash and so on alright. She spoke to me so differently, as if she was suddenly speaking straight to me as an adult to an adult and something in her attitude seemed

634c. much more sympathetic. She was very nice to me and it was the first time that anyone had considered that I might be needing any help. She said that my hair needed washing, which it did where I had been sweating, and she asked me if I would like one of the nurses to wash it for me. I would very much have liked someone to wash my hair for me but I was too terrified that they would think that if I could not wash my own hair then I would not be able to bathe my own baby. So I thanked her really nicely and said that I could manage to do it myself and that I would go and wash my hair straight away as it did need washing. As I got out of bed and got my things ready to go to the bathroom the Sister seemed sorry that she had suggested it as I was weak enough without having to go and wash my hair but I was so determined to do what was asked of me and be capable and independant that she seemed to understand and let me carry on. I felt awful that there was an offer of help standing beside me but it was more than I dare do to admit that I needed help or I would not get my baby back and so I just could not accept help or let them see that I needed it and I felt worn out already without the awful hurdle of having to go and wash my hair. Down the end of the ward at the big bathroom by the Sisters office there were a lot of Mothers smoking and they asked me how my baby was. I told them and one of the

635c. Mothers whispered to the others that she could not make out what I was saying and I realized that my speech was slurred. Another mother told her quietly to just pretend she did understand me as that was what all the nurses were doing and said that one of the nurses she knew had told her all about me. She said that the nurse had told her that I had been a great problem at school and panic rose inside me as I wondered how on earth the nurses had found out when I had tried so hard to keep my baby's record clear and I wished the nurses would talk to me and not about me. When I had gone to wash my hair I heard one mother say that I looked terrible and another said that I was being kept heavily sedated and that was why they had all been told to watch their babies and alert the nurses if I went near any baby as I was a mental case and the nurses did not think it was right that I was on the ward at all. Some of the other mothers whose beds were near mine spoke up for me and said that they had actually spoken to me and I seemed very nice, but the one who seemed to know all about me said "They are nice, its when they turn that they are violent, shes a schizophrenic". The other mothers did not seem to have realized that I was being watched because I was violent and it did not seem possible that it could be me that they were talking about. It was the first I had ever heard that I might be schizophrenic and it just did not seem possible. Normally I would have challenged what they were saying and asked them what they were talking about but the fact that one of them was on such familiar terms with the nurses made me too afraid to and I just calmly

636c. carried on as if what they were saying just did not concern me at all and as if they were talking about someone else. While I washed my hair I began to feel as if nothing else anyone said could hurt me any more as I had been hurt too much and for too long, and I could feel myself sinking into such a depression that I just could not lift myself out of. I was also having trouble washing my hair, I had just had to clean the wash basin first as it was dirty and I saw that the old white china basin was cracked and pitted. Apart from it not being nice I felt that I had to clean it very well as I felt totally unable to keep well where there was any kind of dirt because I just did not have the resistance for it. So I had used a lot of energy cleaning the wash basin and once I started to wash my hair I realized that I had not anticipated how heavy my arms would be to lift up to my head to try to lather my hair, especially while bending over the wash basin. My arms could hardly move and apart from being so heavy that they ached I could not bear the suffocating ache in my chest as I raised my arms, but I had to do it. I did not wash my hair with my usual thoroughness but I rinsed it and towelled it dry as soon as I could. I combed my hair and went back to my bed and just lay there with my hair damp because I felt too exhausted to brush it. A nurse saw me and came over and told me sternly to dry my hair properly so I sat up and combed it a bit more but I did it in slow motion so that no one would see that I was too weak to do it. A

6370. lot of my hair seemed to come out as I combed it even though I did it gently but luckily it was warm in the ward and my hair dried quickly.
- After a while a Doctor came onto the ward and as it was the Houseman I expected him to come and see me at last about my baby but he went to talk to someone else who had her baby with her and then he went off the ward. He did not come near to my bed to see me even though he did not look very busy, and when I saw him leave the ward without coming to see me I began to panic that no one could tell me what was going on. The picture in my head of my baby in her incubator also seemed to be fading and she looked so still that I began to get very worried indeed. When the dinner was served I was so determined to show the staff that I was no different from the other mothers that I got myself out of bed and went to the table for my dinner. I thought that if I had managed to go and wash my hair while all the other mothers were smoking in there then I could have dinner with them as well. The other mothers made me very welcome at the table with them but it was only when I actually sat at the table to eat that I really found out how difficult feeding myself had become. Until then I had thought it was just difficult to eat because I had been in bed but now my mouth seemed numb and I could not always get the fork with food on it into my mouth properly. I became so embarrassed that I left half my dinner because I was aware that my fumbling about and not being able to handle the food was putting other people off their dinners. I was so ashamed to find myself like that and I could not understand where my beautiful table manners had gone. I

638c. found myself unable to manage
to feed myself properly and just
using a knife and fork had suddenly
become the most difficult thing
in the world. After lunch the Sister
tactfully suggested that I stay
by my bed for all my other
meals and I felt so ashamed of not
being able to feed myself that I
was only too glad that she did
suggest it as I could have done
with eating the other half of the
dinner if nobody had been looking.
I did not know what was the
matter with me but my arms just
seemed to be getting heavier and
heavier. I got back into bed with very
great difficulty and I just lay
there exhausted. Some of the
mothers went off to the shop and
others went outside to smoke and I
must have slept for a bit and then I
woke up feeling very upset and
tearful. I was so worried about my
baby and when other babies
cried in the ward I quietly cried
too as I wondered if there was
someone to go to my baby if she
cried as no one turned up to
see to the babies around the
ward and at times their mothers
were nowhere to be found, even
though they mostly seemed to be
terribly proud of their new babies.
I realized that they really did not
know what it was to have nothing
of your own at all and I really I felt
glad for them that they did not have
to feel like I did and be so worried about
their babies and anyway the babies
seemed to stop crying on their own after
a while as if they were learning to be
independant so soon, perhaps too soon.
The only two mothers left on the ward
anywhere near my bed were sitting

639c. beside their beds chatting and they were very worried about me. They said that I needed more attention from the nurses and they said it was disgusting about the way that six of them had quickly made my bed that morning while I was out in the toilet because they did not know what to say to me about my baby. I knew that that was what had happened and what they said confirmed it. They kept looking across the ward at me and one of them said that I did not look as if I would harm a fly let alone a baby and said to the other patient that she wondered if I wanted to hold one. She said that no one was treating me as if I had had a baby and the other one said "look at the way she watches the babies in their cots and cries when they cry. Its upsetting her". The other one said that she would not mind letting me hold her baby just so that I could know what it was like to hold a newborn baby. She said that her baby was a girl the same as mine but she said to the other patient that she did not like to offer incase that upset me too. I knew they understood exactly how I felt but holding the other babies would not have helped. The other babies all had mothers and I wanted my own baby.

Some of the mothers came back from the shop saying that they had been chatting to the Houseman down there as he had been on his way to the Doctors rest room as he had nothing to do. The mothers were chatting quite freely and loudly and they had no idea that what they were saying was really hurting me because once I knew that the Houseman had stood around chatting to them with nothing to do I finally knew that he was free and if he was going to the Doctors rest room then I

640c. knew that he had no intention of coming to see me. When I realized that, my mind panicked as to why the Doctors could not face me and I had to force myself to believe to myself that he was still coming to see me and be determined that I would not give up hope for my baby.

I lay there full of worry and cried for ages. Some mothers came back and the babies in the ward were fed and changed and then some other mothers went off and the ward was quiet again. Outside the ward it got darker as if it was going to storm and the sky suddenly took on a very dark and bleak look. The wind seemed to be blowing and howling in a most eerie manner. Outside the window behind me that looked onto another ward across a piece of grass in the direction of Ladywell Park and River, the Seagulls were flying about in the gusty wind. At first it seemed like an ordinary storm brewing up but then I began to feel afraid. I had a sudden very insecure feeling about my baby and I wondered if she could breathe. Then the seagulls outside seemed to come nearer the hospital buildings and make themselves more noticeable. They flew around for some time, screeching their piercing cries as they flapped about in the strong wind. It was like being out at sea with them there and the strong wind and when someone put the lights on in the ward because it had got so dark, at least it felt more like we were in a lighthouse in the ward. The seagulls were crying out like babies

641c. crying in hunger and their cries were really loud and piercing. People in the ward began to remark about them and then all the birds flocked together and began to fly in formation like a flock of migrating birds which I had never seen seagulls do before. Their cries became more sinister and they seemed really evil. After flying around above the lawn between the two wards they started flying nearer and nearer the ward that we were in. There were windows both sides of the long ward that I was in and before long the birds were all flying in exact unison around the building we were in. They flew down in front of the window next to my bed and up over the roof of the building we were in and swooped down in front of the window opposite my bed. They circled exactly above where my bed was in exact unison and swooped up and down at the windows behind and in front of me in unison, screeching through the glass at me as if they were trying to frighten me and find a way in. Other mothers began to feel afraid and they said that it was sinister. As the seagulls came in close by the windows and screamed their piercing cry, they were all looking directly at me and I could see the marks on their faces looking like painted masks. We had a saying in our family, because my mother's family had been seafaring people, that seagulls were a sign of stormy weather and that whenever our family hit troubled times the seagulls heralded it, but I had never seen this before. I had never seen seagulls fly in such precise unison and none of the other mothers had ever seen anything like it at all. The two mothers opposite

642c and Mrs. Carter in the next bed were all getting alarmed about the seagulls and I was terrified of them. The seagulls seemed to be growing in number as other seagulls came and joined them and each new bird that came was bigger than the last. I had never seen such huge seagulls before at all. Some of them must have had a wing span of four feet or more and people on the ward were asking where they could have come from. Suddenly the biggest seagull of all arrived and as the others seemed to fly back to let it through, it hovered menacingly outside the window next to my bed. Its wings filled the width of the window and reminded me of a human being as it hovered there with its wings outstretched, head up and legs dangling. It looked at me and the face of the bird was filled with hatred. It somehow had the face of the devil but it resembled my own father at the same time. It hovered for a moment and then came crashing against the window. It crashed and crashed itself against the glass pane again and again as if it was trying to break its way through and it was amazing that the glass did not break with the force of the bird crashing against it but there seemed to be a strange glow my side of the window as if something very good had miraculously strengthened the window. The patients could not see the glowing but they could see the bird and Mrs. Carter quickly moved her babys cot right away from the window.

643c. that was next to my bed incase the glass broke. We were all afraid and the bird which was looking directly at me was still trying to crash through the window pane as if it wanted to get at me to tear me to pieces. The girl opposite me looked at me and said "Its her those birds are after" she shuddered and said to the others "and her babys supposed to be dying". A staff nurse came along to see what was going on at the window and seeing that the bird was actually trying to get through the glass to get at me, she tried to shoo it off but she did not go too near the window herself. She said to the other patients "Her babys GOING' alright". The huge gull finally went away and the noise from the other seagulls died down a bit but I was still afraid and I lay there crying in terror. The staff nurse told the other patients to leave me alone to rest as I needed a lot of rest but I wished that I could have had someone to talk to as I needed someone to be with me really and not to be left alone in fear.

Quite a few nurses came onto the ward and told the patients to lie on their beds for a rest before visiting time. The nurses then sat at the ward tables to read and talk. I desperately needed someone to talk to and I wished that someone could come and talk to me. I could see that the books the nurses were reading were only novels and I could hear them talking about their boyfriends. If they had been studying from nursing books or doing something that they had to do, I could have understood that they did not have time to talk to me, but while they sat idly chatting and laughing together with nothing better to do, it hurt to think that I was lying there with no one to talk to me

644c. and with my baby dying too. They seemed to think that I was lying there resting but I was lying there worrying and none of their tablets could change that. My mind turned over the situation that my baby and I were in and it seemed like a nightmare but it was more horrific than any dream because it was for real and there was no way of waking up from it and finding that everything was alright after all. It suddenly dawned on me that I might have to arrange a funeral if my baby died. I had always been afraid of death and I had never been to a funeral and suddenly the prospect of having to face my own child's funeral lay in front of me so unexpectedly. In the previous months I had prepared myself for my child's birth which had then been traumatic enough but now it seemed as if I was being prepared for her death and it was horrific. I was only eighteen years old and right at what was supposed to be the beginning of my adulthood, my whole life had folded up on me. I realized that the teachers at school who had considered me to be immature were wrong. It was the other girls at school who were considered more mature than me by the teachers who suddenly seemed the immature ones to me with the way they fussed over their exams which were only pieces of paper and their collections of clothes and books and records, and with the way they always tried to out do each other. They had left me years behind them in exam achievements but I could out strip them all in coping with life and death in life's experiences. I wondered bitterly what O-level the teachers would suggest

645c I needed to qualify me to cope with the situation that I was in and I thought with bitter ironic humour that there wasn't one and that I could tell them that. I knew that I had to take my mind off what was happening to me before I went mad and so I took out the book "God so loved the world" that my mother had brought me to read and I opened it, determined to try to read it. To my dismay each sentence seemed to have no meaning as I struggled to understand it but I carried on as at least I was doing something. A nurse saw me and got up from the table and came over to my bed. I was so glad because I thought that she had come to talk to me and I smiled at her but she wasted no words in kindness and she roughly took the book out of my hands scolding that I was not to read because I had been told to rest. She put the book on my locker and seeing the title of the book "God so loved the world" She was really nasty to me and said "and you are the last person who should be reading that" as if she was calling me a hypocrite. I could not understand why I should not read a book about God at all and when she took the book away from me a terrible fear filled me as if it reminded me of an awful suffering from when I was a child.

The nurse went off and because I had nothing to do I was forced to watch the horror of what I had been through in labour showing itself through my mind like a film that had been burned on for my entertainment because I had nothing else to do and I seemed to have no way to express it except in the tears that began to roll uncontrollably down my cheeks. I cried and cried and cried solidly for well over three hours and once I started crying I

646c. could not stop crying. I used all the whole new box of tissues that I had and I did not waste any, as I threw each one away it was absolutely soaked with tears. When I had finished the box Mrs. Carter gave me half a box of hers which was very kind of her indeed. She chatted to me for a while but she could not help me except to tell me that she understood how I felt and to try to tell me not to get too upset for my baby's sake. She was really kind to me but I was in mental torment about my baby and the worries grew bigger and bigger in my mind because I could not understand how the situation had become so frightening and why the nurses seemed so against me. Apart from two of the patients who got really worried about me and another who said that I was having a nervous breakdown not one nurse came near nor by me. I was not hysterical but I was in a totally upset state. My head ached and ached and I got more and more exhausted but I just could not stop myself crying. I had got into such a state that I was just crying uncontrollably and could not stop it even though I tried to. Then after well over three hours of crying the pressure in my head built up and up and in one agonizing splitting sound that tore through my head, something inside my head split. At that moment all my worries went except my one concern for my baby only. That was all I knew and when a nurse did finally come and spoke to me all I could say was 'yes'

647c to everything. The nurse who came was
the one who had come to find me in
the bathroom the night before and she
was friendly towards me. She saw me
as she passed my bed and looked sorry
for me and she came to speak to me.
She looked carefully towards the office
first to see that no one saw her speak
to me as if she and the other nurses had
been strictly told not to. The nurses at
the desk had gone some while before
and as no one was about except the
patients she came and spoke to me. She
asked me if I was worried about my
baby and I said yes. She said that
the Doctors had decided that 'no news
was good news for me'. She asked me
if I knew what she meant and when I
said yes she went on and explained
it incase I did not. She said that the
Doctors had decided not to tell me
anything unless the baby died. She
said that all the time there was
no news I must realize that it was
good news because it meant that
my baby was still alive and she said
that all the time she was alive
there was hope. She tried to explain
to me that if the Doctors came to see
me it would be to tell me that my
baby had died as they had decided
not to build up my hopes. She asked
me if I understood and I said yes. She
told me to cheer up as best I could and
tried to, but I felt as if I was clinging
onto my sanity by its last thread. All
my self confidence was gone and I just
lay there worrying about my baby.

At supper time the Sister from the
Special Care and Premature Baby
Unit who had been at my babys
christening came along with the
Sister who had been very nice to me
on the ward. The two of them strongly
suggested that I go home tomorrow

648c. and when they said that I would like that wouldn't I ?, I said yes as if all hope was gone out of me and as if I did not have any fight left in me. Supper was served just then and I had no appetite at all. The other mothers were asking for second helpings as they had done at other meals because they were hungry with feeding their babies but I had no appetite at all. I ate as much as I could of an oily spaghetti and onion 'vegetarian dish' that the kitchens had sent up for me when I would have preferred the plain vegetables that the other patients had but without the meat that they were eating. I looked at my menu on the tray and all that I had asked for on Saturday morning when I had filled in the menus had been crossed out. I wondered if my Mother had been in the office about that too because 'VEGETARIAN' was written all across the card and I had not told anybody. I wondered if my mother had been suggesting exotic dishes to those two nice sisters and had lost me the plain vegetables that I usually had at home. I supposed that if I was a vegetarian then they thought I had to have proper 'vegetarian food' even if it was so different from what I usually ate that I could not eat it, and it seemed silly when I could have had more appetite for just the ordinary bit of vegetable with no meat that I had at home. I had not even wanted people to know that I did not eat meat as I was ashamed that I did not. It was not my fault and it was not fair that

649 c. all that rubbish be mixed up with my baby's notes that would follow her around for the rest of her life, and utter despair came over me that so much had gone wrong. I had tried so hard and everything that I had planned for my baby that most parents take for granted had been snatched away from me straight away.

The two sisters had been chatting to patients at the table and when they had finished talking to them they came over to me. They were trying to be cheerful to me but with my baby so ill and me feeling so naturally worried about her, their cheerfulness seemed rude to me. I knew they had the other patients to think of and that was why they did not want me lying there crying but I felt that they could have left their cheerful smiles behind when they came over to my bed. I was obviously in a state of severe grief and although it was obvious that they were embarrassed at having to talk to me, they were trying to cheer me up and they seemed to want to just ignore the fact that I had been crying over my baby and they just did not mention that at all. I was lying in bed physically weak and tired, with swollen red eyes from having cried all afternoon and they looked at me and were smiling and cheerful as if they thought I should be laughing and joking too. One of the patients at the table seemed to feel that it was the right moment to speak her mind about me to the sisters and she said to them that it was about time they looked after me. She said that none of the nurses had been near me all afternoon and that I had been in a terrible state laying there crying

650c. all that time. The Sisters seemed to know already but they joked to me "been crying eh?" and they just seemed pleased that the nurses were doing exactly as they had been told to and had not come near me. One of the Sisters reassured the patient that it was me who did not like the nurses very much and told her that it was best for them not to come near me. The patients did not seem very convinced about that and I had no dislike of the nurses at all. It was my mother who had always hated nurses and it was terrifying me to have people looking after me, leaving me jugs of water and making my bed while I was out in the bathroom but never speaking to me or coming near me. I found it so frightening that it was pushing me into a state of absolute terror and I just could not understand how it had come about as I had tried so hard to see that everything would be alright.

Once one Mother had spoken up about me it seemed that the others found their tongues too, and one Mother said that I seemed to cry when the babies in their cots cried as if I was missing my own baby. That was exactly how I felt but the Sister of our ward dismissed it quickly by saying that I was very young to have had a baby and so it was probably that I felt very much like a baby myself at the moment. I was quite stunned when she said that and some of the other mothers tried to stick up for me by saying that I was only a year or two younger than they were. Then the Sister smiled at me as if I had been a naughty child who had been caught out telling lies and she said "Are