

Soreit, Gran's here!... (very, very very GREAT Gran!!!)

This is my account of what happened during my childhood. I have written everything I can remember and this includes remembering Heaven from before I was born. As strange as it seems I was actually born remembering Heaven and I have no explanation for it. Also, this is a written statement and so no attempt has been made to write it into a story.

Whether or not it was some kind of dream I had before I was born, I do not know but I remember Heaven very clearly as the place that I came from. Apparently other children have been born who have talked of having come from Heaven, they have been very psychic and have usually died at a young age of four to six years old. I can remember going alone to a place to be by myself before I came down to Earth and standing on a cliff over looking a bay where I watched the little nutmeg shell shaped boats bobbing about out on the water with their little brightly coloured sails. It was evening and the Sun which is very much older than the Sun of this world was setting so low on the horizon that everything was a glorious rich deep golden pink and the sky was a fabulous sight. I was standing as still as a statue looking ahead of me and practising serenity but the wind was gently playing with the soft material of my long plain white dress and distracting me so much that my thoughts would not be still. I was dreading coming to Earth as it was the most terrible place anyone could be sent to because of the awful things people did to each other and to the creatures there and being sent to spend a lifetime on Earth was the worst that could be asked of us. Suddenly I heard a voice calling from behind me and my friend Michael ran up to me to tell me it was time for me to go.

As we walked along he told me that it would not be so bad and when we arrived home everything was so busy as the whole of Heaven prepared for battle. Even the winged horses were waiting and excited and some of my dread lifted as I walked to see my Father. He and my Brother were talking together and as I reached them my Father gave me a look with his deep kind eyes that gave me courage. He asked me what gift I would like to take to Earth and I did not hesitate as I told him. My Brother had not decided until the last moments of his time on Earth when he had known that the friends he had made on Earth needed more time or they would not make it to Heaven. While he had been dead his spirit had laboured in the darkness making a bridge between Hell and Heaven, a place of rest, so that given time that gulf could be crossed by those who had not achieved what they should have done during their time on Earth. I had long known what my gift would be and I asked that there should be no more pain or crying as that was what the Earth people cried up to us for and my Father agreed that it should be my gift. Thoughts of their sufferings crossed my mind and I wondered what else they should have to make their lives easier but my Father knew my thoughts. His eyes twinkled kindly as he told me that the Earth must still grow of it's own accord and that

was all I must give them and then he added gently, as if he knew my love of them all and my impatience, and told me that I must only leave them the keys but that in as many ways as I suffered myself I could leave them the keys to unlock that particular kind of suffering.

I can remember waiting to come down here in the place in Heaven where we wait to come down to Earth. The ground of that place is like a sea of the same colours as the sky looks from Earth and above the beautiful blue and white which is perfectly straight and even, there is a low, soft floating white mist that looks like clouds. I did not come down to Earth alone because about thirty Men came down at different times and to different places from me and I watched each of them disappear down into the mist as they went. They were all older than me, mostly dark haired, and they were all men. All too soon a lady, who I knew as my Heavenly Mother, and I were the only two people waiting to come down to Earth, and knowing that my Heavenly Mother would be my Earthly Child was almost as if I was looking at the last generations of our family in reverse order.

My last memory of that place is of my Mother standing with me waiting to see me go as if I was going away to school and she was waiting to see me off on a train. She did not look old enough to be my Mother because she was so young and gentle looking and as we stood waiting together my last memory of her is of looking at the outer wisps of her long thick gingery-brown hair shining golden in the light and as it shone the little wisps of hair reminded me of the golden edges of the leaves of a very thick and valuable book. My Mother was so calm, sure of what she knew and kind as she told me not to worry. She told me I would be perfectly alright and that later on she would come down to me on Earth. I knew that she would come and that I would be her Mother.

★ I can remember my body being fashioned from before the beginning of it's very first cell and it was actually before that when I was not one cell but two different parts that my life began. I can remember swimming in a crowd of people towards an egg and it was that swim that was so very important because I had to be first in that race. Racing towards that egg gave me a special kind of energy and when I had run fairly and won that first and most important race I had achieved my first success in life. The knowledge that I had done it once and could do it again was what gave me, not life which I already had but something very much more, like the will to live, which would give me the courage to keep on trying to win through each challenge in my life as a Human Being. Experiencing that swim for myself also gave me the knowledge that I needed in order to know how to run that race again and again each time the flame of life in the long chain of my descendants would be passed from one link to the next. I was also the right one out of all those swimming competitors who deserved to win that race because each of us carried a set of gifts, or one special gift worth more than all the others, and out of all those people the set of gifts that I carried was the best and most suitable combination of gifts to equip me to swim in the very much stronger tide of the Human Race and to match the gifts carried in the egg that I was about to enter. More than the race it was the moment when all the competitors stood still at the end, waiting

to let the egg call which one it wanted even if it meant letting someone else win if they were more suitable, that was important. It was as if so many had been called but only one or a few would be chosen and that ability to respect the right of others to be better than me was what won me not only the ability to be human but the destiny to be divine.

My Soul was created before my body and had it's own understanding as it gently waited for my body to fashion itself around me and my greatest achievement was when enough of my brain was complete for me to start using my unfinished body by beginning to move in time to the sounds that I heard and felt coming from the Human body that held me. I loved the warm darkness that I was in as I felt safe and secure there and day after day I listened to the sounds that I could hear. They were the sounds of my Mother's organs as they worked and by listening to how they sounded I knew how my Mother was feeling and what she was thinking especially if she was suddenly excited or if she was feeling ill. The sounds I could hear became my first friends and I actually believed that they were talking to me because their noise always seemed to be so close to me and it kept me company. They had a whole language of their own and they told me exactly what my Mother could hear and see and how she felt. By the time I was born I had formed a relationship with my Mother that I would never ever have with any other Human Being and I literally knew her 'inside out'. The sounds I heard were consistent and although they became slower some times and faster at other times they never ever stopped and that gave me a tremendous feeling of security that my Mother would never ever give up caring for me. I was close to my Mother and had formed an attachment to her before I was born so that when I was born I needed her alone to care for me and no one else. I can remember being born because gradually one day the sounds that I had listened to for so long started to get faster and faster as if they were telling me that I had got to go. The fast drumming was saying that I could not stay there any longer and that I had got to get out and so they were pushing and pushing to get me to go. They got faster and faster and more desperate as if they were telling me to hurry up and go because they just could not stand it any longer until they pushed me right out and I was born.

It was a horrible feeling to be born because suddenly people were able to move me and I did not like it. I felt utterly wretched that the sounds that had been my friends for so long had pushed me away from them and rejected me and I suddenly felt cold and alone. Perhaps if my Mother had held me still and close to her straight away and if I had faintly been able to hear her heartbeat from outside her while it was still beating quickly then I would have recognized her for what she was, my Mother, but things did not happen that way and birth became a humiliation that I never got over.

I could see perfectly clearly when I was born but greater than any of my senses was my 'sensitivity' to everything. I could sense everything around me with the wisdom of a very learned adult and just 'know' whether things were as they should be or not in a way that was actually very painful because all I could do about what was wrong was to cry. I can remember the first thing I saw was the bright fire in the fireplace in front of the bed where I was born and the Nuns who lifted me upside down by my feet and smacked

my bottom to make me cry and then cut the messy cord and dried me. I hated them being able to see me and being able to touch me but their voices sounded kind and excited to see me as they told my Mother that I was a girl and then started making exclamations about my hair. I can remember looking at the Nun who held me as if I was indignant that she could do what she liked with me but of feeling a respect for the aura of holiness she had about her that I could actually feel. The Nuns showed me to my Mother when they had wrapped me in a warm sheet and I can remember the three of them talking about my hair. The older Nun sent the younger one off out of the room for a moment to tell my Father that he had a baby girl and I can remember a Man's voice at the bedroom door shortly after the younger one came back and the Nuns telling him that he could not come in yet. Then I heard my Mother's rough voice call out to my Father that she was alright and that I was 'lovely' which I thought was a cheek because she spoke as if I was her property and she could do what she liked with me, when actually I was already sure of myself as a person in my own right and I felt that I belonged to myself. I could understand every word of what they were saying to each other and when I cried I was shouting about what was wrong but they did not understand what I was saying. Also, the further I was getting away from my Mother and the more that other people who I had no attachment to were looking after me, the more independent I felt and the less I felt that I needed her or the security she had once held for me. In a time that I should have been experiencing the security and warmth of family love I was infact learning to distance myself from people who should have been close to me and bonding myself to the independence of insecurity and coldness. If I had lain alone in a cot or place where I could see shapes or colours then I could just as easily have bonded myself to objects in the place of my Mother as well.

The way I was held up made me feel afraid because I could see the floor a long way beneath me and I could see quite clearly how far I could fall and I did not like the height. Although I did not like being touched and moved about, I did not mind the Nuns touching me because I could sense that they were good people who were doing everything they had to do in order to give me to my Mother and not to take me away from her. When my Mother had been examined when she was pregnant it had sown doubts in my mind that someone was trying to reach me and that I was not entirely safe where I was. Having been born had made that fear become a reality and I should have been wrapped up warmly and held quite still before my feelings of trust were completely destroyed.

The Nuns bathed me, dressed me in clean warm clothes, wrapped me in a blanket and gave me to my Mother to hold but even in that short time it was already too late because I had felt what it was like to be rejected and alone and I did not want to make friends with anyone ever again and especially not with the person who had pushed me out of her body to be born. If I felt any attachment to anyone in that room it was to the Nuns because they were the first people to hold me and I could sense their 'religious goodness' about them when they held me in their arms which I could most definitely not feel about my Mother when they put me in her arms. The Nuns called my Father into the room when they had tidied up and as soon as he came into the room I sensed that I

did not like him. The Nuns asked my Father if he was pleased that he had a little girl and then gently reprimanded his ingratitude when he said that he was not pleased because they had wanted a boy first. The Nuns let my Father hold me and once I was in his arms I sensed something so horrible about him that I screamed and screamed until he quickly gave me back to the Nuns to hold and they gave me back to my Mother to hold again.

After the birth there was some concern about where I was going to be put and the Nuns, after refusing to let my Mother have me in the bed with her in case she smothered me in her sleep, took the bottom drawer out of my Parents dressing table and laid me in that in front of the fire to keep me warm. They told my Father not to let the fire go down in the night and despite his protests that it was dangerous to leave a fire burning at night, as well as a waste of coal since the Nuns had already used too much coal to warm the room for the delivery, and despite my Mother's protests that having the bottom drawer out of the dressing table made the room look untidy with it stuck in front of the fire and that if the Nuns put it back into the dressing table with me in it and closed the drawer half way in then she thought that I would not only keep warm inside there by myself without wasting any more coal but the room would also look tidy again, the Nuns made the pair of them see sense and do what they asked them to in order to keep me safe and warm. Finally before the Nuns left the house that evening the two women bent down to the drawer that I was in on the floor in front of the fire to have another look at me. My Mother was fast asleep and my Father had not come back into the room for sometime and the Swiss Midwife who became my Godmother sighed sadly and said to me "A beautiful baby like you and you have not even got a cot to sleep in". Once I was alone I watched the firelight lighting the room and making dark shadows and the light from my hair shining on the wood in the little drawer that was my bed making it a very light and friendly place to be as if I had my own light to light up the dark places I found myself in. The room was so poor and I thought I should have been laid in a cradle in a palace. No one had told me this and I just assumed I had come down to the wrong place and that Michael would come and get me, but he did not come and it dawned on me with sickening dread that I was here on Earth and very, very vulnerable in my smallness.

I was a nuisance to my Mother from the day I was born and the next day when the Nuns came there was an awful row between them and my Mother when they wanted to bath me and change my clothes. My Mother was in a frightful temper and told them that it was quite enough for them just to change my nappy as my clothes were clean enough and I had only worn them one night. She said that once a week was quite enough for me to have a bath and change my clothes, the same as she and my Father did. She said that 'it was no wonder people said that babies were a lot of work if people went changing their clothes like that when it was not necessary'. She said that she and my Father had worked everything out before I was born and decided that I need not be a lot of work if they treated me the same as they treated themselves. She said that I was a member of a family now and that meant that I had to do the same as everyone else and that included not making a lot of unnecessary washing. My Mother told the Nuns that she and my Father did not want other people interfering and making them a lot of extra work

because they had worked out what they were doing for themselves. My Mother told the Nuns that they were not to bath me and wet another lot of towels because the towels they had used for the delivery were still drying in front of the kitchen fire. She said that my clothes were clean, I had been bathed the day before when I was born and that they were only to change my nappy if they wanted something to do.

The Nuns insisted that they must bath and change me properly and they just got on and did it but when they got some clean clothes out for me to wear my Mother became furious that all the new baby clothes she had knitted for me were being worn. My Mother had knitted and sewn a beautiful layette of baby clothes but she liked to look at the brand new things folded neatly in the drawer and when I was born she did not like the look of me wearing them. It was as if she either wanted to keep the clothes unused or else that it was some other baby that she had knitted them for and she did not like me wearing any of them. My Mother had also knitted all the baby clothes in fluffy white angora wool and after I had worn them for a few days the Nuns discovered that I was allergic to the fluffy, itchy wool. As soon as the Nuns had to leave me in my cotton winceyette nightdress and wrap me in a piece of cotton sheet my Mother changed her mind about me wearing the things she had knitted and told the Nuns to put me back in the angora baby clothes because she did not want all that knitting wasted and she said that it was disgraceful for me to be wearing a nightdress in the daytime when I should be properly dressed. The Nuns would not do it and so my Mother just put me back into the itchy clothes after they had gone. I can remember crying miserably for hours because I did not like the feel of the clothes on my body and I can remember my Mother just sitting in bed smoking and ignoring my crying.

Day after day the Nuns told my Mother off when they found that she had put me back into the clothes that I was allergic to and then they went out to the kitchen and told my Father off for not having cleaned up the awful mess that the house was in. My Father had bought some wood to make me a cot as soon as he had known that he was going to be a Father and after months and months of working on it and making nothing but a mess he had got no further than sawing up the wood for it. While my Mother was confined to bed after having me he had done what he liked with the rest of the place and it was in an awful mess. There was wood and wood shavings all over the floor as well as his greasy tools and there was even wood in the sink so that the Nuns could not get to the sink to fill kettles and they could not boil them because there was glue all over the cooker where he had been boiling it up to stick the rails of the cot together. The Nuns told my Father he had no right to be doing woodwork with a newborn baby in the house and that he must clean the place up because being poor was no excuse for being dirty. They said he must get his wife something to eat because all he had given her was cornflakes with cold milk and she needed a proper meal, and that he must do some washing as well because the things would take some days to dry and soon there would be no clean clothes to put me in. My Mother shouted from the bedroom to the Nuns to "Leave the poor bugger alone!, it's his bloody holiday and he doesn't want to spend it doing a load of bloody unnecessary washing". The Nuns told my Parents that my Father was not on holiday since he was supposed to have sprained his ankle. They

said that Dr. Galvan might be silly enough to think my Father could sprain his ankle and then strap it up well enough to cycle to Deptford to fetch the Midwives for his wife who had just happened to go into labour there and then but they were not so silly as to believe it. They said they did not blame my Father but they had seen it time and time again that a man waited for his wife to go into labour and then called in the Doctor for himself to get a week off sick so that he could stay at home and look after his wife, before they called out the Midwives to deliver the baby. The Nuns asked my Father why he had not saved his summer holiday for this time in order to be at home to look after his wife and when he said he had just started a new job and would have no holiday for the whole of the first year the Nuns said that they could not blame him for what he had done but they knew his ankle was not sprained and that my Mother had gone into labour some time before Dr. Galvan had arrived to look at my Father's foot. The Nuns said they also knew that my Mother had given false dates about when her baby was due in order to claim an extra three weeks Maternity Allowance and that I was born one week early and not two weeks late, and they knew what went on because Deptford was a poor area and all the Mothers were doing it.

The Nuns told my Father that since he was home he could look after his wife and baby by doing some housework but he argued that doing housework was sissyish and that he was a Man and not a 'sissy'. He said he was getting fish and chips each evening for his and my Mother's meal and that the housework could wait for ten days until my Mother got out of bed because that was what he and my Mother had decided to do. The Nuns told my Father that there was nothing 'sissyish' about doing housework while his Wife was having a baby and that he should see the Men in other houses they were visiting because they not only kept the house spotlessly clean and cared for any older children while their Wives were in bed but they could cook too. They told my Father that perhaps the housework could have waited if he had not made such an awful mess of the place they were living in but such dirt was dangerous to a Mother and Baby and if he did not clear up the appalling dirt in the kitchen then they would have to call for an ambulance to take my Mother and I into hospital until the place was clean enough for us to come back to.

My Father soon felt ashamed when he realized that other Men were doing better than he was and he gave in and cleaned the place up and did some cooking but my Mother became alarmed that the Nuns could insist that we must go into hospital if the place was dirty and even more alarmed that I could be the cause of her being sent there. She hated the way the Nuns kept seeing to it that everything was alright for me and although they gave my Mother plenty of attention and tried to tell her what a lovely baby she had got, my Mother could not stand them saying it. She hated the way they kept fussing over my beautiful hair and on the third day when the Nuns had left after their daily visit, my Mother got a pair of scissors from her knitting bag and cut off all the ends of my hair and threw them into the fire to burn them. I still had plenty of hair but my Mother always told me later it was only black hair because she had cut off all the tiny blobs of gold that had been lit by the static electricity to shine like hundreds of tiny electric light bulbs because she wanted a boy with black hair not a girl with black

and ginger hair. The next day the Nuns turned up with some people from their Order and from the Church of England who they had brought to see my hair and they were shocked and embarrassed to find that my Mother had cut all the gold off and burnt it. They had very politely asked my Parents if it was alright for them to bring the people to their home and they had not expected my Mother to do that to me before they arrived. After that they were very careful about what they said to my Mother about me because, as they told my Father, my Mother had very severe depression. I do not remember my hair being cut unless it was done when I was asleep but my Aunts often told me that they were shocked that my Mother had hacked all the ends of my hair off with her scissors so soon after I was born.

My Mother would not breast feed me either. She tried it for two days and then when the Midwife said that I had taken to the breast beautifully, my Mother pulled me away from her in the middle of the feed and replied to the Nun that it was a filthy thing that I was doing to her and demanded that the Nun should fill the baby's bottle that my Mother had bought from the chemist with powdered formula for me. On the tenth day after I was born which was the last day that the Midwives were calling to visit my Mother, I had been a bit off my feed so one of the Nuns told my Mother to give me warm sugared water to drink instead of my feed. My Mother did not need to be told twice not to give me a bottle of milk to drink because of what had happened to her brother Alfred and although the Nuns had only meant my Mother to do it for one feed my Mother gave me warm sugared water at each and every feed from that day onwards and I never knew what it was to be given milk to drink.

Apart from not letting me drink milk, my Mother would never leave me to sleep in my pram. My Mother and Father took me with them to buy a pram for me when I was eleven or twelve days old and it was the first time I was taken out of doors. I can remember my Mother carrying me all the way to Pines Departmental Store in Lewisham Way and into the Baby Department to buy the pram. I can remember my Mother complaining bitterly about the prices of the prams and the Manager of the shop telling my Parents very nicely that they ought to go to the Welfare Department and ask them for a pram. My Mother would not do that and for some reason she paid up and bought one of the prams despite the fact that it cost her the last of her savings to get it. My Father would not pay for any of the things that my Mother needed for me because he said it was her baby and so she must pay for what it needed. When the last of my Mother's money was gone she was completely reliant on my Father for support and years later at times when she was in the depths of despair she always used to tell me that if she had not spent the last of her money on a pram for me then she could have got away from him time and time again. Without any money my Mother could not have got far enough away from my Father for him not to know where she was, nor could she have paid for somewhere to stay while she looked for a job in order to keep herself. Once the last of my Mother's savings had been spent on my pram, my Father kept her so short of money that she was penniless and could not get any ideas into her head about leaving him which he knew she might do and since her own Parents would not have her back my Mother was forced to stay with my Father.

As soon as my Mother had bought the pram, my Parents had expected to be able to walk home with me in it but they had not remembered to bring any blankets with them to lay me on in the pram. My Father tried taking off his jacket to lay me on that but it was too cold and he had to put it on again and so my Mother had the choice of pushing the empty pram or carrying me which for some reason alarmed her. As it turned out I screamed when my Father took me in his arms so he was forced to push the empty pram while my Mother carried me home, which was not what either of them liked because my Mother wanted a pram to push and my Father nearly died of embarrassment when another man walked past and made a joke about him pushing the pram by saying "Look mate, the baby is supposed to be in the pram and she's supposed to be pushing it while you tell her what to do." and then he laughed at them when he found out that they had been too stupid to realize that they would not be able to put a baby in an empty pram unless they brought some blankets with them, which embarrassed my Parents as they were very slow and had not thought of that. They had also only dressed me in my knitted coat and hat without wrapping me in a blanket to carry me out of doors because my Mother wanted to show me off in her knitted baby clothes. Women stopped my Parents in the street to tell my Mother to wrap me up as I was a new born baby and would be lucky not to catch pneumonia in the bitterly cold weather but my Parents had thought people made too much fuss about babies to do it and by that evening I had caught my first cold. My Parents had expected to walk their new baby home in the new pram and have people stop to admire me and congratulate them but their first trip out had been a disaster with the Manager of the shop telling them to get a welfare pram, and people ridiculing and criticising them and worrying about the way they were looking after me. As soon as my Mother had the pram to put me in, she found that she could not bear me to go to sleep in it in case she found me dead in it like my Grandmother had found Alfred dead in his pram. Again and again my Mother kept waking me up as soon as I fell asleep with the result that although I slept right through the night instead of waking up for feeds, I did not sleep naturally and I always felt miserable and had a peculiar sort of headache from the way my Mother kept shaking me awake every time I managed to fall asleep. I am also quite sure that what my Mother did to me had something to do with the way that I can remember being born. I am sure that I should have spent a lot of time peacefully asleep as a baby and in the time that I was asleep I should have lost the memory of being born but because I was not allowed to sleep I came through the time of babyhood remembering all the things that I should have forgotten. People told my Mother not to keep waking me up like that because it would make me nervous when I was older but my Mother would not take any notice of what they said and then she stopped people coming to our house to see her and I if they were only going to criticize her.