

751c and when the baby was better I could have her back. She said that she had looked up the recovery time and it was usually three weeks. She said that my baby was also premature and the time that she had to spend in an incubator would have to be taken into consideration as well but my baby was a very good weight for a premature baby and she might weigh enough by the time she was three weeks old to be recovered from the operation as well as ready to come home. I mentally adjusted the time clock of my mind to extend the time I had to cope with the ordeal of separation from ten days to three weeks and then rested my mind on the fact that when the three weeks was up I could have my baby home and catch up with lost time. I asked the doctor if the danger was over and if my baby was going to live after all and she most definitely seemed to think so but when I asked her what the other two serious defects were she said that there was nothing else. I asked her if she was absolutely sure and she corrected herself and said that as far as she knew there were no other defects, only that she had been operated on and was premature. I was relieved but I felt absolutely devastated that I had actually been made to believe that there were two other serious defects. It was what having waited to know had done to my mind and my speech that was so unjust, only to be told that there was nothing wrong after all. It was not good enough but I was glad for my baby's sake that there was nothing else. The Doctor looked towards the office where the Sister was as if she did not like what was

752c going on at all and she asked me what questions I had to ask her about what was wrong with my baby. I said that I had no questions about the Vaginal Atresia and I could wait three weeks for her to come home. I said that if there had been other handicaps I would have had questions about what could be done for them but Vaginal Atresia was nothing and that had been put right, it just took time to recover from. The Doctor said that it had been nothing to make a fuss about had it? as if she was gently chiding me for making a fuss about something. I said that I had not made any fuss at all, I was just interested to know and I had loved science at school, I only wanted to know what was wrong as she was my baby and I wanted to know how she was. The doctor looked very thoughtful when I mentioned school because she had seen me at a school medical and although she had only seen me once she knew which school I had been to. She asked me how old I was and I said 'eighteen'. The Doctor looked as if she was trying to work something out in her mind but then she let it go as if she was trying to make the best of things and did not want to talk to me about school. Then, instead, she talked to me very positively about my baby as if she was telling me that I had missed out on a lot but I could still make up for lost time with my baby. She told me that I

753c would get on alright with the doctors at Great Ormond Street, and I seemed to think so as well. I was talking to this doctor as an equal even though I had some difficulty expressing what I wanted to say because my nerves were shattered and my speech was very bad but although I stammered a bit there was nothing that she could say to me that I did not understand and she did not have to simplify anything. She painted a good picture of Great Ormond Street in my mind as if it was a much better hospital than Lewisham for a sick child because it was more specialized. She did not actually say it but she implied that there would be no mistakes there. She told me that Great Ormond Street would encourage me to take expressed breast milk for the baby and I was only too glad to do anything I could for her. She said that I realized that I would not be able to hold my baby but she said that nowadays mothers were encouraged to have as much contact with a premature baby as possible and so they would encourage me to hold her hand while she was still in her incubator and there was no reason why I should not be changing nappies for her even if the nurses had to tube feed the milk to her. Then she joked as if she thoroughly understood how I felt in my eagerness to look after my own baby as every mother was the same and she said 'but even so I was not to worry if I could not do that because I would soon get plenty of nappies when I got home' and I smiled too because I knew that it was true but I did not mind a mountain of nappies I was only thankful that she was normal enough to dirty a nappy. I

754c was just glad that my baby was alive. The Doctor told me that I could register my baby as a girl because even though there was an abnormality in her sex organs there was no question about her sex and she looked at me very seriously and said that it was a shame because if I had had a boy he would have been perfect. Agony shot through my heart and I said 'yes' and looked straight at her. In my heart I echoed the words silently 'yes, he would have been PERFECT' as if because I had seen him in that dream months before when my mother said he had died I had seen how perfect and golden haired he was. Without asking any questions, the Doctor talked to me very simply and said that sometimes where there were twins, the boy died very early in the pregnancy and the girl was born sterile. She said it only usually happened to cattle and that because she knew that I was a vegetarian she wondered if I suffered from a lack of protein. She told me to see that I ate a nourishing diet, and my child too. She gave me really sound advice and told me to keep the baby warm when I got her home and if possible to keep her with me all the time to keep an eye on her. She warned me about cot deaths, (which I knew about as a baby near us had died like that,) and said that sometimes babies do die for no reason at all, they are just found dead in their cot and she said that my baby would be at risk for cot

755c death as she was small and premature. She told me to watch my child and be especially vigilant over her if she had a cold or was sleepy for no reason. She warned me for my own good and said that if it ever happened to me that I found my baby dead, and she hoped it never did happen, but if it ever did and she said that these things did happen, she said that whatever I did I must tell the police and everybody at once. She said that whatever I did I must tell somebody straight away. It would mean that they had to take the baby away and there would be a lot of commotion about it and it would be heartbreaking for me but what I must never do was to hide the baby. It would be a terrible tragedy but there was no grief so deep that it could not heal and there would be a lot of people to help me but what I must never do was to HIDE IT. If a baby died, it died, but I must let people see it at once. If I hid it I could be put in prison or a mental hospital. She sounded as if she was not supposed to tell me all this but as a doctor she was not going to let the opportunity pass for my own good and she was so kind and seemed to understand the whole situation and what I must have been through. She told me that I must get some nice things of my own. She told me that I must spend my Social Security money to buy myself some nice clothes and things of my own and I realized that she understood exactly how little I had of my own. She asked me if I was alright to go home and I said 'yes'. So she said goodbye to me and said that she would send my mother along to me from the office. It sounded as if she had already

756c spoken to her and a feeling of hum-~~-~~
illation came over me that she was
'in the office' as if she had the
upper hand just by virtue of the
fact that I was ill in bed and
that bed happened to be out on
the ward. my mother seemed to
always manage to get herself
into the place where all the
decisions were taken, wherever
it was, and I was always on the
outside, wondering and worrying
as to what was going on.

As the Doctor left me, a nurse
who had been standing by a
table, watching us all the time
and waiting there, came over and
joined the Doctor and walked
off the ward with her. She said to
the Doctor that I had taken the
news very well hadn't I?, and I
realized that she had been watching
to see my reaction. I looked around
and saw that the other nurses
were all leaving the places that
they had taken up just before
the Doctor had come to me. I had
thought that they had all been
busy doing different jobs on
the ward but they all just left
what they had been doing and
went to the office at the same
moment that the Doctor had
finished speaking to me so I
realized that they had all seen
'my reaction' when the Doctor had
told me about my baby even
though I had not wanted them
to because it should have been
a private moment between me
and the Doctor. I was not unduly
distressed about what was
wrong with my baby but my
feelings ran very deep and
they were not something

757c. to be stared at. I had been no trouble to the staff at all and so it was not as if I was going to have hysterics or something that the Doctor might need help with. I felt totally degraded and humiliated that no one could treat me with respect or privacy, or even like an adult. The Doctor had been nice but the nurses watching degraded the whole thing as they were not there out of kindness or to help me but just to coldly stare.

My Mother came straight along the ward with the suitcase she had brought to pack my nightdress and things into and she looked very snug and pleased with herself and said that she had to go back into the office to see the Sister before I left the Hospital. I tried to take control of the situation and said that I expected the Sister wanted to see me but my Mother had the upper hand over me and she was not going to let go of it. She said that she had to see the Sister before she took me home and she called me 'child'. I said that I was going home with her, she was not taking me home like a child, I was a mother now, but my Mother just laughed sarcastically and said "we'll see about that" and I dreaded going home as I was so afraid of her. I felt the loss of my baby even more because I was going home without her and I just could not understand how everything had turned out like this for both of us when I had worked so hard for it not to be. My mother put my suitcase on the floor and I managed to get out of bed and put the things from my locker into it. The case was already full of clothes as my mother had brought some clothes for me but they were not my usual clothes. The dresses that I had worn while I was pregnant were not there and I asked her where my clothes were. My

758c Mother spoke to me very slowly, simplifying each word as if I was a simpleton and told me that I was not pregnant anymore and she asked me very sarcastically if I knew that. She then explained to me very slowly that if I was not pregnant anymore then I did not need maternity clothes did I? I said nothing because it was no use arguing with her so I looked at what she had brought me. They were jumble sale clothes and I wondered if they were even clean. They certainly were not mine and my mother told me to get them on and not make any fuss about it. The clothes looked a bit like a school uniform. A navy skirt and white blouse and I wondered if they were my sisters clothes but they were not. I had no other alternative but to put them on and I asked my mother if she could pull the curtains round the bed for me. She asked me what was the matter with me and told me to do it myself and not be so stupid. I could hardly walk and keep my balance, let alone draw the curtains right round that big bed to get dressed. A nurse came up and I could hardly believe my ears when she asked my mother if she was having trouble with me. My mother told the nurse that I wanted the curtains drawn round and I saw her glance at my mother as if she was rather hard not to do that for me. Then my mother told the nurse that I just did not seem to recognise my own clothes. The nurse sympathized and said

759 c. that my Mother must have a lot of patience to deal with me and while I got dressed my mother talked to the nurse outside the curtains about how good natured she was with me and so prepared to make allowances for me. The nurse asked my mother if she was going to help me get dressed and my mother said 'oh, no it was best to get me to do things for myself' and the nurse said that my mother knew best and then she went off but it sounded from the way the nurse spoke as if my mother had told them that she even had to dress me and until that moment no one had questioned whether it was true or not. Behind the curtains I thought to myself that my mother had had to say that because she knew that I would never have let her see me undressed let alone come anywhere near me.

The clothes my mother had brought me did not fit me at all because they were small teenage sizes. I could not get the straight navy skirt done up at all and my bust size was larger than the blouse so I could not button it up and even though I had lost weight I could still have worn my old maternity things until I got some new clothes. My shoes were my own and so was the coat and when I had managed to secure the skirt and blouse I put the coat on and buttoned it up so that no one could see that the rest of my clothes did not fit me properly and I looked fairly respectable when I came out from behind the curtains. Even so, I was still ashamed of not having the right clothes to put on because they were completely the wrong size and I looked and felt a sight. The coat was too big where I had lost so much weight

760 but the other clothes were childrens clothes. As I appeared I told my mother that I could not get the clothes done up and that I also needed a nursing bra. She was furious but more with jealousy than anger and said sarcastically "what for?" I told her that I would also need to express milk for the baby but she was livid and sarcastic and said "little girls don't get milk for their babies". I ignored her and told her that I was quite normal and she said that I was too young to produce milk and so I just gave up about it. My mother told me to hurry up because Janet was waiting and she said that it was a nuisance that she had not known what time I was coming out because Stella had been in the hospital that morning for a blood test in the Ante-Natal Clinic and so she could have brought me home. My mother said that Stella had been told that she was anaemic in the Ante-Natal Clinic and that they had given her some iron tablets and she had got to take one everyday. She said Stella had had to wait ages and if she had known what time I was coming out my mother could have told her to wait a bit longer for me and us two girls could have come home together on the bus. She told me that Stella could have helped me with the suitcase and we could have taken it in turns to carry it, and I just could not believe that my mother could expect me to go home on a bus after having had a baby.

761c. only four days earlier. It made me feel so helpless and that I just had no one to help me. If I had been an unmarried mother who was entirely alone then the Hospital would have seen to it that I got an ambulance to take me home but because I had my family pushing in on everything they were taking any proper care away from me.

One of the Domestics saw that I was ready to go and she was standing waiting to do my bed. She asked me very nastily where my fruit and flowers were and said nastily that I should leave some fruit for the nurses or something after all they had done for me. One of the patients told her quickly that I had not had any flowers and I felt so ashamed and hurt too because if I had any fruit I would have taken it home to give to Clive and Stella but when she said that I wondered if I owed the nurses something even though they had not even talked to me. So I asked my Mother if she could get some sweets or chocolates from the Hospital shop for the nurses as I had no money but my Mother just snorted loudly in disgust and said "What! buy sweets for those greedy gits to feed their faces on. Don't be so stupid with any of those fancy ideas". She told me to come on and get out of here because we were keeping Janet waiting and she picked up my suit-case and went off down the ward. As I followed more slowly she told me to hurry up and asked me what was the matter with me. She told me to stand up and walk properly and as I nodded goodbye to the other patients, I tried to walk properly as I wobbled down the ward after her but it was really difficult as my back felt broken in half right across the middle.

762c. As we got to the office my mother put the suitcase down outside the door and told me to just stay with it incase someone pinched it while she just went in to see the Sister. I told her very politely that she could just stand outside with the suitcase if she liked as I was going in to see the sister. My mother was annoyed that I did not just stand outside with the suitcase as she told me to because she expected me to be totally obedient and do everything she told me to without question but I wanted to be in the office if something was being said about my baby. As well as that, no one had said anything to me about how I was to look after myself. I was just being turned out and I was not going without them even saying goodbye to me. My mother picked up the suitcase and went into the office and I followed her in. In the office there was just one Sister on duty sitting at the desk. She was a coloured woman who I had never seen before but she seemed to know all about me and she was not very pleased to see me walk into the office with my mother. She welcomed my mother, gave me a most unwelcoming look and then politely told us both to sit down. Before the Sister could start talking to my mother I tried to speak up for myself and I asked the Sister very politely what it was that she wanted to say so that she would speak to me and not to my mother. The Sister told me firmly that she wanted to talk to my mother and not to me. Then she turned to my mother and told her that she had only got to

763c. give her some tablets to give to me and she told my mother that they were the tablets they had already talked to her about. I asked the Sister what the tablets were and the Sister spoke to me in a kindly but very sarcastic voice and said that they were only Iron tablets, but as she said it I got the distinct impression that she was saying it as if she was repeating back to me what I had said to them about the Iron tablets being all I had taken when I was pregnant and that she was saying it as if she did not believe me at all. She picked up a white paper bag from the Hospital pharmacy, gave it to me and told me to look inside it. I opened it and pulled out a plastic bottle containing a lot of yellow tablets. The Sister looked at me with the most hateful look I have ever seen and said "Iron tablets!" sarcastically. I looked at the label and saw it said "Valium" so I knew that they were not iron tablets and that the Sister was just being nasty to me. I had never seen Valium tablets before but as soon as I saw them I recognized them as the yellow tablets that they had been giving me on the ward. I had also never had Valium tablets before I had come into hospital. Dr. Galvan had given me a prescription for Valium tablets when I was fourteen years old at school but my Mother had taken the prescription away from me because they were for tranquilizers and I had not needed them anyway, so I had never actually taken Valium tablets before I had come into hospital. The Sister repeated "Iron tablets!" so nastily that I was too afraid to answer her but I knew that they were not Iron tablets at all and I felt totally degraded that she could tell me

764C. that they were a different drug from what I could see they were. It was like telling a child that an 'aspro' was only a sweet; it was wrong and I knew the difference too. I felt myself sinking into depression and it felt as if it was just me alone in that room against two very forceful women. The sister told me sternly that I would need to take them for a very long time and she stressed that it would be a very long time. She said that my G.P. would give my mother more of them for me when the supply ran out and my mother would administer them to me, as if she meant that I could not be trusted to. Then she told me nastily that if I had been on them in the first place none of this would have happened to me and I would not have had a baby because my mother could have kept a better eye on me. I could not understand what she meant at all because it was my mother's fault that I had had a baby. It was her who had insisted that I go out with Norman and when I had tried to tell my parents what Norman was doing they had insisted that I carry on going out with him. So what the sister had said about it just did not make any sense at all but I did not know how to explain it all. The sister tried to take the bag back saying "shall we give these to mummy" and my mother nodded approvingly and I felt so afraid of the way she had got the sister so completely on her side. I remained perfectly calm and said

765C. quite casually that 'it was alright, thank you, but I manage my own affairs'. My mother laughed as if she had a private joke with the sister and said to her 'She THINKS she's an adult.' and the Sister looked at my mother as if she understood that she had to humour me, and then the Sister said to me more kindly but firmly that 'she did not want me back in casualty having taken the lot, that was all.' I took no notice of her as there was no question that I would do that at all and to show that I could look after myself I asked her one or two questions about how I should carry on when I got home, as if to try to get her to talk to me and not to my mother. I asked the Sister if I needed salt baths when I got home to keep my stitches clean, which I knew I did, and I asked her 'what about lifting heavy weights', but the Sister would not tell me anything at all. She just told me firmly that she had spoken to my mother and so had the rest of the staff and that my mother would tell me everything. She told me quite simply to do what my mother told me, and she said it as if that was exactly what I ought to do. She told me that the district midwives would be coming to see me at home for ten days because I 'had just had a baby even if I had not got one', and she said that I was not under any circumstances to set foot outside the house until the midwives gave me leave to and discharged me. She turned to my mother and told her that "that would give her ten days peace before she would have to go searching for me again" and my mother listened to her as if she was so glad of some help in 'dealing' with me. I listened incredulously because I just could not believe it. It sounded as if the Sister was referring to me as if I was continually running away from home, but I had only run away from home twice in the past out of desperation and I would never run away.

766c from home now because if I did I would not have a home to bring my baby back to. Even so I was at breaking point in my life and if my baby died then I would die too, and the Sister and my mother just did not seem to understand that. I was also scarcely capable of walking properly let alone running away from home.

The Sister told me that the only thing she would say to me was that as I had no baby I was just to carry on as normal and that there was no reason why I could not make myself useful to my mother in the house during the next six weeks. She told me that in my case as I had no baby my G.P. would probably think I would be better occupied working and he could shorten my post natal period so that I could go back to work. She said that I certainly did not need six weeks lounging about at home and so I could have my post natal examination earlier but she told me firmly that I was not to come back to the Hospital for that, or at all, as my G.P. would see to that. I felt full of despair because nobody understood that I had done too much work; I was tired and I felt as if people were pushing my mind over the edge by pushing me to work and work when I was so tired and by treating me as if I had not even had a baby. The Sister finished giving me a good talking to by saying "In six weeks from now, you will be back working in your office as if none of this had ever happened to you" and then the strangest thing happened because the Sister stopped talking suddenly as if she

767c. had just realized something and a look of horror spread over her face as she quickly reached for my medical notes that she had on her desk. The notes were much thinner now as if a lot of papers had been taken out of them but the Sister snatched them up and frantically turned to the front where any letters that had been written to the hospital were kept. She took out the letter that I had first written to the hospital asking if I could have an evening appointment rather than a daytime appointment because I was working in an office doing temporary work on a flexible basis and so I was only paid for the work that I actually did and with a baby coming I could not afford time off work, so I wanted to visit the Ante-Natal clinic in my own time. The request had been refused but they had kept my letter and the Sister kept reading it and talking half aloud and half to herself in a panic saying several times over "You worked in an OFFICE and you wrote like THIS!" as she looked at my handwriting. I had only written a quick letter to the hospital and it was not in the beautiful long hand, ink written script that had once filled the pages of my old school books because once I had failed my exams I had just not bothered to write like that anymore but even so the letter was quite neat and properly set out and the Sister seemed to be panicking as she looked at the letter as to what was going on. She was muttering to herself as to what was all this that I was so handicapped and such a trouble to my parents and yet I had worked in an office and written like THIS!. At that point my mother looked as if she was so scared that she was going to jump up from her seat and

768C. run right out of the hospital and just leave me there with the hospital staff but she seemed to see that the Sister was panicking and that while she was like that she was afraid too, so my Mother just sat where she was and stared hard at the Sister with the most evil look on her face I had ever seen. It looked to me as if clouds of blackness were coming out of my Mother and floating towards the Sister and swirling around her but the Sister was not aware of my Mother because she was looking at the letter and my notes. I think at that point she also realized that half of the notes that had been in my file were also gone and it was obvious that nobody had bothered to question what my parents had told the hospital once they saw the weak state I was in. Then the Sister looked at me sitting so weakly on the chair and having such difficulty to find each sentence to get it across to people that I had been able-bodied and able to manage my own affairs only a few days previously and she stared in horror at my face and at my arms as if she was terrified of what she saw in me. Then she seemed so scared, and it seemed to be my Mother staring at her that did it, that she just put down the notes as if she just did not want to see what she saw there and she got up and hustled my Mother and I right out of her office as quickly as possible. She said to me nervously that my mother would look after me, as if she was trying not to question anything about that in

769 c. her mind and the next minute she had literally dismissed us out of her office and closed the door on us and we were just left standing out in the corridor that seemed very much cooler than her office had been and I had literally been 'thrown out' with nobody. My mother said that the sister had been a bit rude just then as if she did not quite understand why, in her usual irresponsible way of doing something and then not understanding what it was that she had done wrong and I just stood there thinking that I had come in here to have a baby and that everything had gone so tragically wrong for us and now we were miles apart. Janet came quickly along the ward to meet us and said that she had got the lift ready to save me waiting. It was so nice to have her there because she was someone outside our family with all its conflicts, and her presence seemed to stabilize things in an awkward situation. We got into the lift and I found it was the most weird sensation going down in it. My stomach felt strange as if my soul and body were not quite together even though it was a very slow lift and although I did not realize it at the time I had not felt like that since I was a child. Janet was looking at me intently and she asked me several times if I was alright and I told her that I was alright, very quietly, as if I did not know the meaning of what I was saying but I was just giving her the politely correct answer whether or not it was actually correct. I also meant what I was saying at the time because I did not seem to realize just how ill I was and I only knew I had to keep going for my baby's sake. As I got out of the lift I was a lot worse.

770c. than I had been when I had left the ward and so Janet and my Mother had to take one of my arms each and even with both of them helping me I was a dead weight as I tried to walk along wobbling from side to side between them. In the corridor two technicians in white coats came along who were obviously from the Pathological Department as both women were carrying swabs and needles on a tray and one of them was carrying what looked like a small metal crate with empty blood bottles in it. They looked as if they were going into the first ward (C1) to take blood samples from the patients but as they saw the difficult job Janet and my Mother were having to hold me upright as I tried to struggle to walk along, the two women technicians stopped and watched us. Then to Janet and my Mothers horror one of them said to the other woman technician very loudly "Silly little fool, fancy discharging herself like that" and she said it so exaggeratedly loudly and sarcastically that there was no mistake that she meant me to hear and take notice. The corridor was also completely deserted except for the two technicians, Janet, my Mother and I, so they could not have meant anyone else at all. I had never seen either of the technicians before but from the way they spoke and looked at me they seemed to recognize me and also think that they knew all about me. Janet turned towards them furiously as if she was going to give them a piece of her mind for having said that to me but she looked at me and seemed as if she

771C. decided to say nothing because she did not want to upset me. She would also have had to let go of me to go over to them and if she had done so I would have just fallen right over, so she said nothing and they went off into the ward that they had been going to go into. When they had gone Janet asked my mother if the hospital had definitely sent me home and she asked me angrily but very tactfully if I was sure that I had not discharged myself, and she said very kindly that she would understand if I had discharged myself. I said 'no' and my mother said that the ward had definitely sent me home because they had no beds. Janet was furious with the Hospital and she said to my mother that she thought they ought to take me back to the ward because I could not even walk. My mother agreed with Janet in a very feeble way that she had wondered why I wasn't walking properly when she had seen me up in the Premature Baby Unit on Saturday and she said that it was a good job that she had not asked Stella to take me home on the bus after all because if I could not walk then poor Stella could never have managed me. Janet looked aghast when she realized that my mother had been serious about me going home on the bus and she said to her that I had only had a baby five days ago. Janet tried to reason with my mother that if I had to be sent home then the Hospital should have sent me in an ambulance and if there were no ambulances because of the strike then they should have kept me in hospital, but my mother was quite sure of herself and she told Janet that the hospital had

772c. definitely told her that I could go home on the bus because I had no baby. My mother said that if I had had a baby they would not have let me but since I had no baby they had distinctly told her that the best thing for me was to make me carry on as normal and as if nothing whatsoever had happened to me. Janet spoke to my mother really nicely but as if she thought my mother really had no idea about having a baby even though she had three children of her own and she insistantly told my mother that I had still had a baby even though my baby was being kept in hospital, and Janet told my mother that it seemed to her that no one was taking that into account at all. My mother told Janet that Stella had been in the hospital all morning in the Ante-Natal clinic and that she had been there so long that if my mother had known what time I was coming out she could have told Stella to wait a little bit longer and then come home on the bus with me to save her giving me a lift home in her car but that she did think Janet was right now that she had seen me walk because although I could have got on a bus, it was the walk up Jerningham Road that would have finished me. Janet still seemed to think that my mother was very gawmless and she tried to persuade my mother to take me back to the ward. She was worried that my mother would not look after me properly because she did not understand that I needed proper care and although I did not realize it I was too ill to really understand just how ill I was. Janet was worried

773c. that it was no good leaving my mother to look after me if she would have got me home on a bus only five days after having a baby and she asked my mother if Stella was having a baby as well but my mother laughed and said 'no'. She said that Stella had just been to the Ante - Natal Clinic for a blood test. Janet said that they did not do blood tests in the Ante Natal Clinic but my mother said "Well they do, I've seen the plaster on her arm so she has had one done and she has definitely been in the Ante - Natal Clinic because I have seen the card and they have given her Iron Tablets because she is anaemic". My mother added very matter of factly that she "thought they had done Stellas blood test in the Ante - Natal Clinic because Anne was a patient there" and I wondered if Stella had been to the Ante - Natal Clinic because of anything to do with the tablets Dr. Galvan had given her to get rid of her baby weeks before, but I could not say anything as I knew my mother did not know about that. Janet gave my mother the most peculiar look as if she was a bit amused that my mother was so stupid not to realize that something a bit more than she had realized was going on with Stella if Stella was a patient in the Ante - Natal Clinic but she did not say anything. Then Janet asked my mother if the Doctors had told her properly what had gone on with me because something had gone drastically wrong because I should definitely not be like this at all. She said that she wondered if they had had an accident with me in the Labour Ward and were trying to cover it up. My mother said that she was beginning to think that too but she

774c told Janet that it was not me
she was worried about but the
baby. She said that she wondered
if they had had an accident
with her. My mother said that it
was 'damned funny' meaning
strange that she was born like
that. I said that they did have
an accident when they fed her
with milk but my mother told Janet
that that was not what they
had told her. Janet insisted
that they either take me back to
the ward or to casualty, and ask
the doctors to tell them exactly
what had happened. My mother
began to panic and she said
that if they did that they would
keep me in but Janet tried to
convince her that I needed more
treatment than they had given
me. My mother kept saying that
she had spoken to the doctors
herself, as if she was determined
to be the one who was in control
of everything, and that she knew
exactly what was going on. Janet
could not interfere too much
and my mother was talking
nervously which made me feel
afraid of her. She was determined
not to take me back to the ward
at any cost but underneath it all
I knew she was afraid of looking
a fool if they had covered some-
thing up and she had been too
stupid to realize it. My mother
seemed terrified of being shown
up in front of her neighbours and
although Janet was very discreet
indeed, as she was a really nice
person, she was still a neighbour
and it was more than my mother
could do to lose face in front of
her. There was no chance at all that

775c. my mother would take me back to the ward on her own either as she was determined to get me home at all costs. my mother kept saying that she could not keep making the visit to the Hospital in the cold to see me and saying that she could not take me back to the ward because she was worried about what would happen to me next. Janet seemed to agree that enough had gone wrong too and said that she agreed that I might be better off at home. my mother seized her opportunity and said to me loudly "You come on home with me" as if she dared me not to and then she said to me very nicely "All your baby things are there". Janet just thought my mother was being nice to me and reminding me of my baby but I heard the sickly niceness in my mothers voice about the baby clothes and I knew that she was saying that the baby clothes would not be there if I did not do as she told me. There had been enough trouble over me having no baby clothes already, when I had got plenty at home, and I could not let the evidence disappear, apart from the fact that I wanted them all for my baby to wear, so I had to agree to go home. I was sure that I would be alright so I agreed to go and Janet and my mother half walked me half carried me back along part of the same corridor that the nurse had pushed me along in a wheelchair only five days before on my way to the labour ward. As I struggled to walk along the corridor the contrast between how I had come in and how I was leaving struck me dreadfully. After walking into the Hospital able-bodied I was now walking out a total wreck both mentally and physically. In four days of a living nightmare my body had become useless, my mind was shattered to pieces and my whole life and its expectations seemed to be

776C. wrecked, and more than anything my baby was miles away and she had been taken away under most frightening circumstances. I felt like a totally wrecked ship after losing the battle of a long and horrific night's storm. Even at that I still had hope. I was worried to death about my baby but somehow in leaving hospital I felt that I was getting closer to her, almost as if I was following her somehow and as I had been promised proper news from the District midwives I felt that the worst was over and that things could only get better. I had been given a good impression of Great Ormond Street from the Sister in the Premature Baby Unit and from the Doctor I had just spoken to and so I rested my hopes on going to Great Ormond Street to see my baby and my heart ached with hope that she would live. It felt so unfair that everything had been taken out of my control, my labour, decisions about my baby, and then there had been the discussions in the office between the Doctors and my parents. I felt such a failure and that I had become ill. I just could not understand why I had not just got out of bed and gone in the office to see what was going on. It was why I had just lain in bed and not been able to move that puzzled me and why I had not been able to knit more quickly. It was not like me at all and I felt as if I had disgraced myself by not keeping in control of everything.

As I struggled to walk along it dawned on me that everything I had been terrified of happening to me, had happened and the whole

777c. thing had been so long and drawn out, with so much waiting to know what was going on and the very unkindness of people who knew what was wrong and who did not tell me. I realized that it was peoples attitudes that had made it all very much worse than it should have been. Some of the people who had been nasty to me had only said one nasty thing and gone and then I had not seen them again but pieced together, each persons attitude had made the four days that I had been in hospital devastate the rest of my life. I thought that if only each person had been kind and not condemning towards me and had just said something kind to me when the time had come for them to speak to me, then the whole episode of what had happened to me would have been totally different. What happened would have been good and not bad and I could not understand how people could have been so nasty to me anyway because I just did not know what on earth I had done. As we got near to the way out Janet left me with my mother in a corridor that led directly to the outdoors and she told us to wait inside in the warm while she got the cardrawn up outside the door as it was bitterly cold out. Janet went off and my mother held me by my right arm so that I did not fall right over. She kept asking me if I was alright as if she was alarming me not to say that I was not alright, as if I should be grateful to her for my very existence, and so I said 'yes' every time she asked. I just could not believe that it could all have come to this with my mother so firmly in control of everything. I had expected to leave Hospital with a baby in my arms not with my mother holding mine like a naughty child. I thought of my baby and it was

778 call too much for me because then something strange seemed to happen in my head as if my mind just could not think about it all anymore and somehow the way that my mother was holding my arm and the way I was so wobbly seemed to have something to do with the peculiar sensation I got in my head as if I could not think properly.

Janet was back with her navy blue mini car in just a few minutes and she helped my mother to get me out of doors past the plastic swing doors and into the front passenger seat with great difficulty. My legs were so weak that they had to be lifted into the car and Janet had to put the seat belt on me because my arms were too weak for me to have done it myself. Janet began chatting to me cheerfully as she started up the car and drove along but even though I tried to be polite and chat back I just could not seem to be able to think of anything to say to her and as hard as I tried the most I seemed to be able to find to say was 'yes' to everything she said. I felt as if I just could not think properly and Janet looked at me strangely and asked me if I felt car sick. I said 'no' because that was all I could do to come anywhere near to explaining the 'nothingness' that I did feel and Janet became less talkative. I wondered if she thought I was being rude in not trying to talk to her because it made it look as if I was only in her car for the ride home or something and not because we were friends but as hard as I struggled and struggled to think of something to say my mind became even more

779c blank, so we drove along in silence most of the rest of the way home and Janet seemed rather annoyed about it.

As we drove along I kept looking at the roads that we were driving along and I only seemed to recognize them when we actually came to them. Janet was a very careful driver but it still felt overwhelming to be taken out of hospital and to be moving along so quickly. Even though I was in a car it seemed to be moving so much more quickly than I could normally have walked, let alone in the slow way that I now staggered along. Everything seemed to be moving along too fast for me and I felt that I should have been lying very still and very quiet and resting as my mind needed to be quiet. I kept looking at the streets and I realized that I could never have found my own way home by myself because it was all so unfamiliar to me. I recognized the streets but there was something different about them. The pavements were different, the paving stones were smaller and although they were not clean they were whiter in colour than the brown stone they had been before. The buildings looked plainer too and some that I recognized looked black with dirt and grime as if they needed a good clean. It was the same place but it was so different that I only seemed to recognize places when I came to them and I could not seem to work out what was strange about them. We got all the way to Brockly and were driving towards the shops near to where we lived when I noticed something that was definitely strange and I said to Janet and my mother that the Dairy Shop next to the milk yard was gone. It was a small, very clean shop that was so cool to walk into

780c. when it was unbearably hot in the summer because it had a huge old fashioned fan in the ceiling that kept all the milk, cream and cheese cool; not that we could afford anything more than a pint of milk in there as the prices were too dear for my mother to afford. Suddenly as I looked I saw a steamy looking launderette shop in its place and I wondered where the dairy shop had gone. I could not think of anything else except that lovely cool dairy shop and at first my mother and Janet seemed to think that I meant the Milk yard next door to where the Dairy had been but then they remembered the Dairy and said that it had been gone since I was about five years old. I had no recollection of anything that had happened in all that time and I expected things to be the same as they had been all those years before. As I tried to ask Janet and my mother about the dairy it broke the silence a bit because Janet began to realize that something was wrong with me and that I was not just not talking because I was being unfriendly. Janet said that she expected things looked strange to me after having been in hospital because she had experienced the same thing. She said that it was because of the spinal injection they gave you and she said that she could not remember her baby being born because of the amnesia it gave her. She said that the anaesthesia affected your memory but I told her I did not think I had had an epidural anaesthetic but I wondered if that was what they had done to me when they had waited for me to fall unconscious and would not tell me what they

781C. were going to do to me. My Mother was furious and asked me what on earth I had let them inject my spine for. She said that the spine was the last part of your body that you should ever let Doctors tamper about with because it was too delicate and she said that was why I could not walk properly. Janet said that the Doctors gave spinal injections for pain relief and my mother said "Pain Relief!" in disgust as if I was such a coward to have needed 'Pain Relief'. My Mother told me that if I had accepted pain killers then she had no sympathy for me and she said that if I had let those Doctors do that to me then I had brought the state I was in on myself for letting them tamper about with me and so I deserved it. Janet seemed to think that my Mother did not understand that I would have needed something for pain during labour and she told my Mother that it was a very long time to be in pain during labour without anything. My Mother replied in contempt that I had only been in labour for a couple of hours and that I had not been in any pain at all because the Doctors had told her so. I knew that my mother did not understand and that she would never admit that I had been in labour for so long or without her knowing but Janet spoke out to my mother about it and said that her husband Barry had wondered if I was in labour when I had come into their house to borrow their childbirth book on the Thursday evening. I said that I must have been but that I had had no proper pain. Janet agreed that it was hard to tell if you were in labour with a first baby because you did not know what to expect. She told me that everything would seem strange to me after coming out of hospital and that it would be even more strange

782c. for me with no baby.

We arrived home and as we got out of the car Janet remarked to my Mother that Mrs. Hill, an alcoholic who sang out all the local gossip from her upstairs window when she was drunk, had been quiet for a few days but as we looked at the long row of houses the presence of more than a few neighbours peeping at us from behind their net curtains was obvious and it was embarrassing. He said goodbye to Janet who was in a hurry to get indoors to her baby son Iain who she had left with her Mother.

As we walked up the front path of our house I found that I could walk better and unaided. I was surprised to see that the front garden of our house was immaculately tidy and that the path was clean and had been washed as well as swept because the white tiles were very white. As my Mother opened the front door I could see that the Hall was clean too and even the sittingroom at the front of the house looked cosy with nice cushions on the chairs. The whole place looked clean, polished and much less bare everywhere. As I saw it all on my way through to the kitchen I kept remarking to my Mother how nice everything looked until, to my dismay, she began to get annoyed about it as if she could not bear to listen to what I was saying. In the kitchen my mother put the gas fire on and I could not get over how tidy and clean the new gas fire was, no mucky grate to clean out and no waiting for a lighted fire to burn through nicely and warm the room. The new fire did not smell

783C. of smoke from the coal either. The kitchen seemed like I was walking into Aladdins cave because it was clean, bright and cosy looking. All the dingy wallpaper was gone and the paintwork was white and new. It was just not dirty any more and I kept saying how nice every thing was. I knelt down on the floor beside the gas fire and I noticed the rug and the new carpet. It was not brand new but it was new to us and it certainly had plenty of wear left in it. We had never had our home so good or comfortable before. I felt so deeply grateful to my mother that she had done all this for me to come home to and I thought that for them to have done all this and cleared up all the mess, especially after having the gas fire put in and having decorated the place, the whole family must have had to work together terribly quickly. The wallpapering had been done properly so the walls were all smooth and they had not just papered over the old stuff. I was so surprised that they had done it in so little time and so well, and to see the place so nice was like a dream come true. It was like having a proper home, like other people lived in with carpets and curtains and cosy looking furniture with cushions. I kept saying to my mother how lovely the place looked, so fresh with the paintwork clean and shining and the windows all nice and clean, and I kept telling her that everything looked so polished and the floor was so clean. I told my mother how hard she must have worked and I said that now I knew why she had not come to see me on Sunday afternoon and why she had told the nurses that it was so difficult for her to keep visiting me in hospital

784C. because she was so busy with her ⁸⁸⁵
family. I said that now I could see
that it was because they were
all making the place nice for me
to come home to. My mother got
really angry and lifted her hand
to slap me right round my face
and she said bitterly that she
did not want any of that cheek
from me. I just could not under-
stand her because if my mother
ever did anything at all then no
one ever heard the last of it, so
I could not understand why my
mother had worked a hundred
times harder to do all this and
yet she did not seem to want me
to mention it at all. I told her
that it was lovely because I
had never seen the house look so
nice. I asked her how long it had
taken the gasmen to put the gas
fire in, and where she had got the
curtains and wallpaper from and
if that was what she had spent
all the money I had given her on.
My mother did not hit me; she just
stared at me in disbelief as if I
was a complete stranger and
then she suddenly was not angry
with me anymore. She had thought
I was being sarcastic to her
because she had not done a
scrap of work in the house, except
cooking and looking after her dogs,
while I was away in Hospital but
at that moment she realized
that I really genuinely did not
remember that I had done every-
thing that I was mentioning to
her myself week by week during
my pregnancy and that I had
also paid for everything myself.
My mother kept asking me if I could
not remember sewing all those

785c. curtains on the sewing machine and scraping off all the wallpaper and making all the cushions. She told me that I must be able to remember doing all that painting, but I had no recollection of it at all. I could remember working so hard and having used up all my strength but the house seemed so changed that I just did not recognize the place at all. My mother said half to me and half to herself "You've lost your memory!" and then without another word she left me and rushed next door to tell Janet. When she came back my mother told me that Janet was not over worried about me not being able to recognize my own home. She said that Janet had told her that she had felt exactly the same when she had come home from hospital after having her baby and that it was the spinal anaesthetic which caused it. Janet had found that everything looked terribly bright and colourful after having been in hospital with its white walls. Janet had told my mother that I would get used to it but my mother kept muttering to herself that she was not so sure. Janet had told my mother that her mother had cleaned her whole flat for her so that it had all looked new and clean when she had brought her new baby home so it was a surprise to her and her mother had also arranged all the flowers around the flat that people had sent to their home rather than to the hospital and there were lots of little gifts around the place for Janet and the baby so that it all looked new. As my mother repeated it all to me she kept muttering to herself that surely she was not expected to buy me 'gifts' and she kept asking me, as if to reassure herself, that I had not given her all that extra housekeeping money with the idea that

786c. she should go out and buy gifts for me with it. She spoke to me as if she was shocked and disgusted with me and I said that of course I had not. My mother kept saying that she had never heard of anything like it, and saying "Gifts!", for an unmarried mother! as if she was bitter about it and full of contempt for me. She said "Is that what they do these days!" as if she was near to tears with hatred about it. Then she kept muttering that she was sure that Janet was wrong about me and that I really had lost my memory. She asked me if I was sure that the ambulance was not in any accident on the way to the hospital and when I said 'no' she said "and they didn't keep hitting you around the face when you were in labour?" I said 'no'. Then my mother kept saying over and over again "It's your face!" as if she was demented about it, and then she suddenly became angry and told me that it was all my own fault and that I had brought all this on myself by letting them do whatever they had done to me, and she spoke as if she did not want to hear another word about it because there was nothing she could do about it all anyway so she did not want to listen to it.

After some moments of silence my mother followed my gaze to the mantelpiece where I was looking at the kitchen clock. The glass was cracked right across it and and it sounded as if it was ticking with quite a different tick now. I remembered that my mother had told me that the

787c. clock had broken when Uri Geller had sent Britain bending while I was in hospital and that my father had mended it but she had not told me that the glass was broken. So I said to her " You didn't tell me that the glass was broken; It sounds different too." My Mother stared at me as if she was ashamed of what had happened and she said quietly " The alarm on it is broken as well. Your father mended the clock but he could not do anything with the alarm, that was completely broken." I nodded quietly and my Mother stared at me for some time then she seemed to become almost hysterical and cried at me " It was you who did that! It broke when Uri Geller sent Britain bending but it wasn't him at all, It was you. You broke that alarm clock, not him. All those keys and spoons that bent, and that soup ladle, and all those things in that Police station. It was your demented mind that did that. [Although I had no recollection of it at the time my Mother was referring to the things that she and my father had done to me as a child: The keys that had just vanished on me and the long punishments that I had received for losing them; the cutlery that had bent in school and lost me my precious school dinners; the washing up that I had been made to do even on Christmas day; the soup ladle that was my Mother's pride and joy and the way I had dreaded her ladling out the huge ladle full of soup that was my only hot meal and which I could not eat for fear of the pain it caused in my weak stomach; And the Police station in Kent where I had been locked in a cell and sent home for trying to run away from home] My Mother said " Your father and I saw that in the war. When someone was physically exhausted, and then tortured beyond what they could stand, and then they were made to come face to face with

788c. the earliest thing that they had ever been afraid of, they went mad and whatever it was that they were afraid of in the room blew up. They tried to torture people enough to get things outside the room and further away to blow up if they had strong enough mental powers, it was the cheapest and most fantastic weapon that Germany had ever found but it was possible, that was how Jesus tore the veil of the temple. With you it was the alarm clock on the mantelpiece. It always was your fathers alarm clock with you. God knows what they've done to you. [At that moment she had a look of agony on her face that meant she was talking about the men who my father knew and had let come to our house when I was younger]. You did all that and nobody even knows it was you! Geller took all the credit for that and it wasn't him at all. Thats why they got him to go abroad on Sunday. That kind of power can't cross water! So it proved it was you. Even Geller doesn't even know that he was just a puppet, they just used him to cover up what was happening to you." Then she paused and said "but I could tell people, I could go straight to the papers and tell them everything that's gone on. They would listen and it would be on the front cover of every paper tomorrow. Then everyone would know. People have a right to know what's happening in this country." Then she seemed to sneer at me as if she hated me because I was so different from her and she said to me "but you wouldn't want that

789c. would you? everything always has to be so' private with you! and if I did tell anyone they would kill me and then what would happen to you?" My mother paused as if she was thinking back about things that were painful for her to remember and then she changed the subject and said quite suddenly that she had got to take her 'poor' dogs out for a walk because they had been made to wait for their walk while she had gone to the hospital to collect me with Janet, and now she wanted to take them out at once because it was not fair to them.

I felt ashamed that I had taken up so much of my mothers time and I knew that the dogs always came first in my mothers time before her children because as my mother said 'they were the ones who could not speak.' My mother told me to get up from kneeling on the floor and to unpack my case and so I got up unsteadily and lifted my case onto the settee where I could reach it better to unpack it. I did not even stop to worry that it was too heavy for me or that I should not be lifting anything, because I could not be strong enough to disobey my mother. I took my coat off and started to unpack the case but my mother came straight over and took over taking the things out of the case. She started lifting the things out of my case but instead of putting the things away my mother only piled up the things next to the case as if she was only interested in searching through it to see what was there. I stood watching her and I realized that I had never seen my mother so frantic before. It was as if she just could not help herself searching frantically through the case as if she was dementedly looking for something. When she had finished looking through everything

790C in the case without finding what ever it was that she was looking for she said to me absent mindedly "No dirty st's?", as if she was demented about something and as if she was not really talking to me but at me, as if she thought I was somebody else and I noticed that she was speaking to 'her' in my Grandmothers voice. Then she snatched up my coat and searched through the pockets until she found and seized the tablets that the Sister had given me. It was obvious that they were what she was looking for and I had never seen anything like the way she snatched them up, because even her hands were shaking and she had the look of a maniac on her face. I had never seen my Mother as bad as that before and it seemed to be because I had been away from home. My Mother told me that I did not need the tablets and so she would take them. I said that the safest thing to do with the tablets was to flush them down the toilet but my Mother seemed desperate to hang onto them and she said that it would do just to put them in the waste bin but although she put them there she left them on the top of the bin so that she could easily take them out again. My Mother told me to put the things back into the case and when I had done it she carried the case off out of the room. I saw very few of the things in it ever again. When my Mother came back a few minutes later she brought the dogs leads and put them on the dogs ready to take them out. My Mother told me that

791C. she would not be out long, 'about half an hour', but that the poor dogs had to have a good run because she had left them for so long while she was collecting me. She said to me that I would be alright wouldn't I? and when I said yes she went off. I heard her walk down the hall and the patter of dogs feet go with her and then she banged the front door shut behind her and I found myself left alone in the house which seemed ever so big and empty but quite friendly. I sat on the settee and as I sat there in the quiet and stillness of the house I slowly began to realize that I was actually at home. The dream-like feeling of unreal hope began to wear off and I started to look around me and realize the horrible truth that I had come back home without my baby.

I looked at the clock on the mantelpiece that was broken and in the quietness I realized that it also ticked differently because it did not say 'tick-tock' any more only 'tick-tick'. It sounded as if it did not answer back anymore and as if it had been regimentally trained and had lost its character. The gas fire was warm and the kitchen looked nice and homely but it was empty as even the dogs that had been sleeping in their baskets were gone because my mother had taken them out. It felt sad and empty but I was alright about it until I looked out of the window. The weather was dull and stormy again and the seagulls were circling around on the wind above the school playing fields. As I watched them again I suddenly heard them crying like newborn babies as if they were

792c. hungry and at that moment all the drugs that I had been given in hospital wore off and all the memories I had of everything that had happened since ten to one on Thursday 22nd November until that moment when I heard the seagulls beyond the garden in the playing fields again, became horribly clear. My mind showed me the whole nightmare in vivid detail like a picture etched onto my mind too strongly for me to switch off. I suddenly felt terrified of a situation that was peaceful and calm anywhere and that I could never sit down calmly and rest again. I could remember sitting in the kitchen with the clock ticking and making the place sound so homely and I could remember the gas fire glowing and making the place seem warm and peaceful and that I had been safe and happy and yet so unaware that in a matter of hours my whole life would be so horrifically disrupted and shattered by sorrow that I felt as if I could never rest so quietly again because if I allowed myself the pleasure of homeliness, warmth, quiet and such comfort then such terrible suffering could once again be only hours away. The kitchen seemed the same but the clock was broken, the seagulls sounded like hungry babies crying, and even the dogs were gone because my mother had taken them out. It seemed empty and I felt so alone. It began to dawn on me that it was months since I had felt as empty and alone as this and the full truth suddenly dawned on me that my baby was gone as well and so I was absolutely alone. Then panic struck me as my mind threw one memory at me after another, my labour, my baby, the other one in the toilets, the nurses accusations, the

793c. vicar, the social Worker and no rest even for a moment. One picture after another flashed through my mind like lightning in an electric storm and I could not escape from it or block out the piercing cries of the seagulls even though I blocked my ears with my fists. I kept wondering how on earth the Doctors could have literally taken my baby away from me and I could not work out why for pity's sake I had not just got out of bed and sorted it all out or gone with my baby to Great Ormond Street. I realized then that I really had been kept sedated all that time because it was so out of character for me not to have been sensibly in control of everything. I felt terrified that someone could give me drugs and then when I was dozy just take my baby away. I thought that if I had gone to the special care unit with my baby after the delivery the staff would never have had that accident with her because I would have quickly spotted that something was wrong and I just felt so cheated that they had taken mine and my baby's lives and torn them to shreds with their drugs. They had no right to take away any human being's self-control, and fear and shame filled me with the realization that they had robbed me of mine. I just could not believe that my baby was miles away or that everyone in the hospital had been so against me. One picture after another of what they had done to me shot through my mind and I could not stop the pictures coming. An hour and a half later when my mother finally came back from taking the dogs

794c for their walk, she walked into the kitchen and put the light on because it had got dark and I had not noticed. She was full of herself saying that she had been out on the street talking to the neighbours and telling them about me and the baby and then she stopped talking because she had noticed me. I was fully aware of her and of everything that was going on but I was sitting on the settee quietly laughing and crying together and I had no control over it. I just could not stop myself crying and laughing together and when my mother stopped to listen to what I was saying I was repeating over and over again "Mary had a little Lamb and Humpty Dumpty had a great fall" in just the single sentence over and over again as if I was being tortured and someone was standing over me forcing me to keep repeating it. My head was fixed with my eyes staring up at the ceiling and I could not move my head at all, it was rigid as pictures of what had happened to me kept showing themselves one after another through my mind but my limbs were jerking all over the place and I could not keep them still. My mother looked at me as if she had seen it all before and said that they had told her at the hospital to expect me to go through a crisis when I woke up to what had happened to me. She did not seem too concerned about the state I was in because

795c. She just went to the kitchen and made me a drink of orange juice which she managed to get me to drink and then she stood me up. Once I stood up the jerking stopped and I was just left trembling and trying to talk with the most terrible stammer. She went off and got me a nightdress that she told me to get into while she made me a hotwater bottle and then she told me that I was best off in bed. I heard every word that she told me and understood it quite clearly and did as she told me but I had no resistance; If she had told me to do something completely stupid I could only have done what she told me. My mother asked me if I knew where my bedroom was and I said I did, so she told me to go and get into bed. I found my way along the hall and down the step which had never seemed so high before and I went into the bedroom. I was not really sure what all the other rooms were, I only seemed to feel the crushing weight of worry that each one was very big to clean each week and of having to do as my mother told me and work.

I went into the bedroom and another shock awaited me. The first thing I saw were the toys on the shelf. They had been so cheerful looking when I had last seen them and now I hardly recognized them. Each one was the same colour but they looked so different. Their fur was not fluffy anymore, it was all flat and they looked sort of damp but it was not damp in the room although it was very cold. The toys limbs had drooped so that they looked bent, old and fed up and when I looked at their faces their upturned mouths were now all downcast and each toy was

796c actually crying. I nearly screamed and I would have done so if it had not been that I felt sorry for the toys, and not afraid of them. They looked as if someone had done something horrible to them and as I stood looking at them it seemed as if they were crying for themselves because of what had been done to them, for me because of what had been done to me and most of all for the baby because it didn't look as if they were going to have a baby to play with them after all. I just stood staring at them as if I could not believe my eyes because it could not be possible that toys could be crying but it was real. I felt horrified and even more horrified at my mother who had come into the room behind me because she seemed evil and she definately already knew that the toys were like that, which made me wonder what she had done to them. My mother seemed so pleased with herself because I was afraid and she told me firmly to get into bed, which I did. The next minute my mother seemed to become the perfect nurse because she spent ages tucking me into bed and then she gave me a hot water bottle which I was so grateful for because it was warm and then she went off out of the room and I just lay there in bed totally shocked out of my mind. As soon as I lay still the pictures in my memory of what I had been through in labour started showing themselves in my mind and the mental agony of it all started all over again. This time my body was rigid with the cold and despite the hot water bottle I

797c. just could not keep warm and as I could not seem to shiver properly either, the waves of shock kept returning to my head like a boxers punches hitting a punchbag and my head felt as if it was being physically beaten. I lay there for what seemed like ages and I was aware of my brother and sister coming home because I heard their voices talking to my mother in the hall and I heard my mother telling them that I was home but that they were not allowed to come into the room to see me. Outside the window I was aware that it was getting dark as I lay indoors in the little world of my own private agony, and then a ring on our front door bell brought me to my senses. I heard my mother go along the hall to open the front door and then I went into a state of sheer panic because I heard Norman's mother, Mrs. Clark at the front door. Her loud forceful German voice was telling my mother very firmly that she had telephoned the Hospital and had been told that I was now at home and so she had come round and she wanted to come in to speak to me. I was terrified of her and sheer panic shot through me that my mother might let her into my room. Mrs. Clark was telling my mother that she had a right to see her grandchild and that she had come to see me about making arrangements for her to go to Great Ormond Street to see the baby and about getting her sons share of the custody of HIS child. Panic tore through me that she already knew that my baby had been born because it was not necessary for anybody to have told her. I was terrified that she knew that my baby had been taken to Great Ormond Street because I did not want her to be able to get to my baby while

798C I was unable to be there to stop her ~~DEPT~~
and I felt that it was so unfair
that everyone had taken the whole
situation out of my hands and
had done what they thought was
best with mine and my baby's lives
with no proper thought for what
might really be best for us. I had
not wanted Norman and his mother
to be involved at all and I felt so
powerless and defenseless that my
mother could bring them right into
the room where I was if she chose
to, even though I was terrified of
them. So it was the biggest surprise
of my life when I heard my mother
defend me and tell Mrs. Clark that
the hospital had no right to have
told her anything about me on the
telephone because my mother
was the only one who was allowed
to know anything about me. My
mother told Mrs. Clark that she
was not going to let her in to see
me because I was not well enough
to see anyone. My mother told her
accusingly that I had suffered
a mild stroke in hospital and that
the doctors had sent me home for
my mother to look after me. I heard
Mrs. Clark's voice change to one of
shock as she told my mother that
she had not known that and that
the hospital had been most insistant
that I was alright. My mother said
"Well, she's not!" accusingly to
Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Clark quickly
asked my mother if I had the baby
with me, as if she wondered if the
hospital had lied to her about
that too but my mother said no.
Mrs. Clark tried to insist that
she wanted to come in to talk to me
and that she would not stay
long but my mother shouted at

799c. Mrs. Clark "Don't you understand? She doesn't want anything to do with you! You are not coming in here to worry her! She is not to have any worry at all, its worry that's caused all this!" My Mother seemed a fine one to talk because it was her who had caused most of my worry but she seemed to shut Mrs. Clark right up when she shouted at her and once Mrs. Clark was quiet my Mother carried on talking forcefully to Mrs. Clark as if she was trying to keep her away from me by making her feel afraid and guilty about the state I was in. My Mother told Mrs. Clark that she had no right to go to Great Ormond Street, she told Mrs. Clark that the baby was dying anyway and even if the baby didn't die neither she nor her son had any "rights" to the baby. My Mother told Mrs. Clark that her son had better be careful too because not only could he be prevented from coming near me or my baby by a court order but if he did turn up at the hospital he could face a rape charge because the doctors at the hospital had told her that it was DEFINATELY a rape case and that if the Doctors had said so then it DEFINATELY was because they should know. My Mother told Mrs. Clark that the matter had only been left because I was so ill but that if Norman turned up then the Police would deal with it themselves. My Mother told Mrs. Clark that it wasn't Mrs. Clark's grandchild, it was HERS and as there wasn't room for two grandmothers she was to clear off because Mrs. Clark had no 'rights' to the baby at all. Mrs. Clark shouted at my Mother "YOU TURN COAT, what do you want?", MORE money!, which surprised me because Mrs. Clark made it sound as if my Mother had accepted money from her which I knew nothing of but which would not have surprised me because I knew my greedy Mother would betray

800c. her own flesh and blood for any money that was going. I heard my mother shout at Mrs. Clark that she was to clear right out of our lives and that she was not to come back at all, and she was so forceful that Mrs. Clark knew that she was beaten and she just stormed off.

My mother closed the front door and came along the hall to my room. She asked me if I had heard all that at the front door and I said yes. I knew that my mother was only bluffing to Mrs. Clark but I was still surprised that she had stuck up for me. I expected my mother to have shown Mrs. Clark in if she knew that it would frighten me and I felt so grateful to her that she had not let Mrs. Clark in to me. My mother told me that she had told Mrs. Clark to clear off but that I was to let that be a warning to me. She said that if I did as she told me she would keep Mrs. Clark away from me and if I didn't then she would fetch her back and she said that it was as simple as that. My mother asked me if I understood that and I said that I did because I was afraid of her. I felt as if I was held in a suspended fear of Mrs. Clark and her family and somehow because my mother said it to me just before I was going to go off to sleep, like she did when she always told us children what to do, I could never completely shake that fear off and from then onwards I just seemed to automatically obey my mother. When my mother seemed satisfied she left me and I fell asleep.

I was so tired after all I had been

801 c. through that once I was back in my own bed I expected to sleep normally but I even seemed to be robbed of normal sleep because my mind had been pushed so far beyond what it should have been made to take that it no longer switched off its wakefulness in order to sleep, in fact when it slipped into sleep it seemed to 'wake up' and I went straight into such an horrifically vivid dream that there seemed to be no rest for me.

I dreamed that it was a very dark night where the sky was pitch black with no moon and no stars. I was in a very high mountainous place where there were three very high mountains. Two of them were of equal size and the third mountain was twice the size of the other two. I was standing on the top of one of the two smaller mountains with the huge mountain ahead of me and opposite the other mountain that was the same size as the one that I was on, as if each mountain formed the corner of an equilateral triangle and the two smaller mountains formed the base of it with the large mountain ahead pointing upwards to give the triangle its shape and direction. On the top of the mountain that I was on my son David Christian and my daughter Elizabeth Christiana were standing with me and they were quite safe. They were aged about seven years old and David was a head taller than Elizabeth with their golden fair hair shining like lights in the darkness. On the other mountain that was the same size as mine Jesus Christ was standing alone. He was wearing brilliant white robes that were a shocking contrast to the pitch blackness of the dark night but although he looked so powerful

802c. he also looked so gentle and kind. He was looking straight at me and as I looked at him I knew that I was his wife and that David and Elizabeth were his children. I seemed to just 'know' by some kind of sixth sense that Jesus and I had to stay apart for a while, each in our own place as if something was going to happen first before we could be together and as I looked around I felt afraid and apprehensive about what it was that was going to happen even though I knew that my children and I were quite safe where we were high on our mountain top looking at Jesus and the other mountain. As I looked around and my eyes became able to see more clearly in the darkness, I could see that there was a valley between the mountains and down in the valley were men and women that I knew whose attitude towards me had caused so much to happen to me during my life and had made it such a misery. There were teachers, Doctors, social workers, so called friends and all the staff at Lewisham Hospital especially from the labour ward. I was suddenly aware that they were all going to be consumed in fire for what they had done to me and I cried out "No, No!" towards the huge mountain but he would show no mercy because it was not his will that they should be forgiven for what they had done because that kind of cruelty to someone so poor and defenceless and to a child was unforgiveable to God. The people in the valley were not aware of what was happening but from where Jesus and I were

803c. Standing we could see everything quite clearly. The huge mountain seemed to raise itself up in absolute fury and then it thundered the loudest and most terrifying roar of thunder and then the whole mountain shook. The people in the valley had seemed quite happy, and even over confident until then but when they saw and heard the mountain roar they tried to run away but there was no escape because they were trapped by the triangle of mountains. The top of the huge mountain suddenly split in about four or five places and it began to erupt like a gigantic volcano. Boiling lava rolled down its sides towards the people in the valley and as the lava reached them I heard each person scream in unbearable agony as they caught alight and were burnt alive. One woman screamed more loudly than everyone else and when I looked at her I realized that she was my old infant teacher Miss Bond. It was the most terrible sight that I had ever seen because all over the place people were screaming and burning like human torches in a kind of human slaughter that had never been seen on earth before. It was like a flood of fire and not water and it was awful. Then at last the huge mountain thundered and shuddered and seemed to have spent itself out. When I looked at that huge mountain I felt sad because it was sagging down to nothing as if it was empty of itself even though it was still higher than us and I knew that it had given itself up because of what all those people had done to me but I would rather have kept the mountain as it was because it was old and I loved it and it made me feel sad to see it because I did not

804c care what all those people had done to me. There was chaos everywhere and then suddenly there was no time for sadness because everything was moving and the land in the valley was moving up and down, heaving itself up and then caving inwards as if giant feet were treading grapes and then the mountains that Jesus and I were on began to move towards the remains of the huge mountain which was flattening itself out but which was still not lower than us. I felt sad again because I knew that I had often longed to be on that beautiful lofty mountain but I had always had to stay in my place and so had Jesus and now that our mountains were moving nearer to it, it was too late because it wasn't a mountain anymore. Then as we got near both the mountains that Jesus and I were on suddenly lowered themselves right down like a landing stage onto the huge mountain and as I stepped onto it I realized that I hadn't lost it at all because I had become a part of it instead. It was still a mountain but it had become 'habitable' and it was beautiful, a bruyly green and pleasant land. There was fresh green pasture under my feet that felt so refreshing and I realized that my feet had become really beautiful to look at. I felt full of Joy and as I looked across at Jesus I realized that he was thinking the same as I was. Suddenly we were running towards each other with our arms open wide to embrace each other. Other people were following us, a few at first and then others and then crowds and crowds of them all

805c. running together towards the new land that they could see as if they had all suddenly seen where to come and each person who came along had become a completely new person after having been burnt in that fire, but it was Jesus and I in our brilliant white robes who got there first.

Somewhere in all that turmoil I had lost sight of my children but they came along as new people too and we did not only get them back because we got everyone else too as nobody was lost and every single one of them were our own children. Jesus and I had been their first Father and Mother and now we had won the right to be their last father and Mother for ever, and this time we would see to it that we would not let them down and that no one would ever know again what it was like to be hungry or thirsty, or not have enough to wear, to have no shelter, to loose their freedom or to feel unwanted through what we had done. We had paid for their food and drink with our own flesh and blood, we had shown them the new body of Eternal life that they each possessed and which they did not have to be ashamed of, we had found the right way to end sickness and pain for ever and we had unlocked again the Garden of Eden with the lock and key of our own lives to give them back the freedom of their first and last rightful home as Gods children where they would never again feel unwanted or make God feel that they did not want him.

It was a terrifying dream and as it ended I knew it was no ordinary dream because I had the most awful feeling that every part of it was going to come true.

Chapter C: pages 1c to 805c. signed:
Anne Maple.