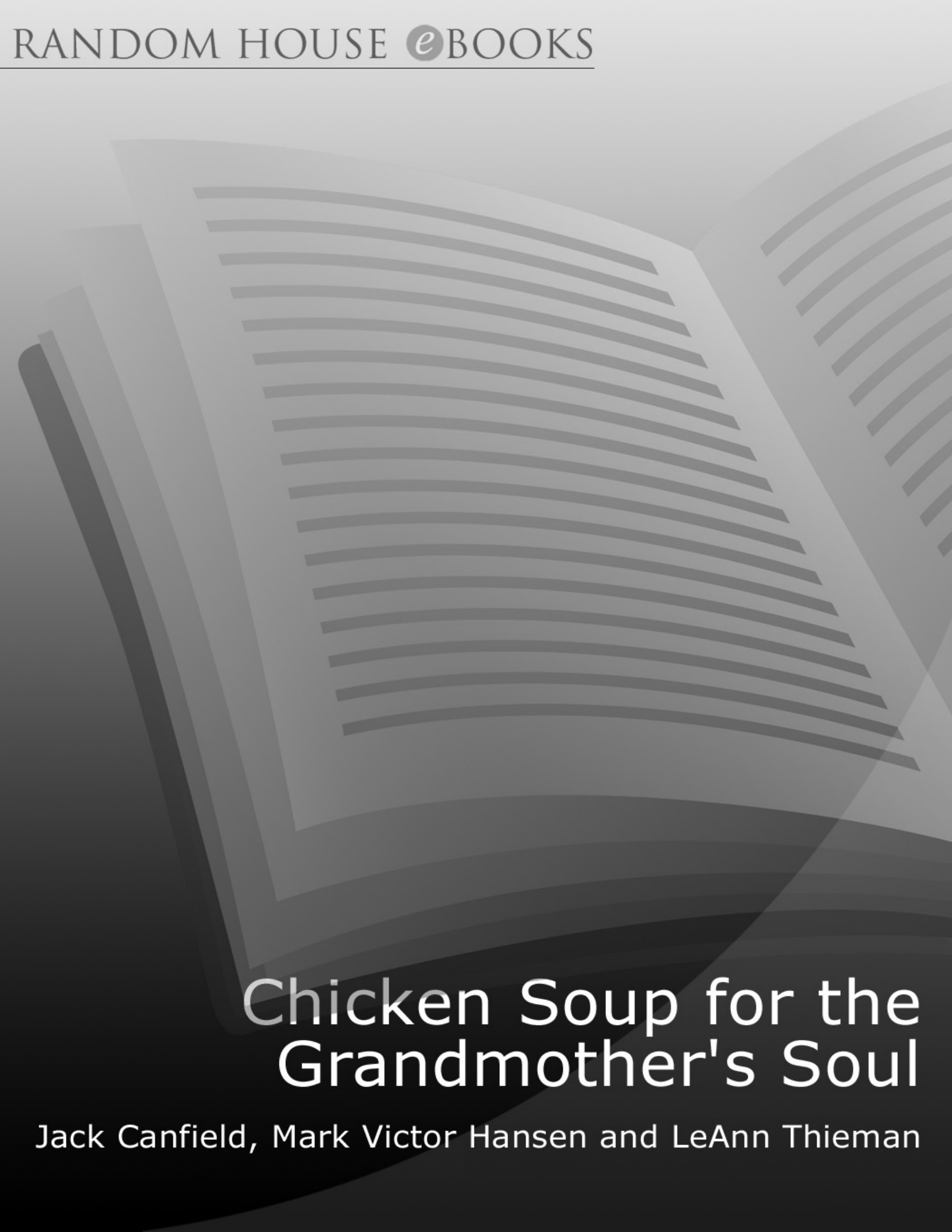


RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



Chicken Soup for the Grandmother's Soul

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen and LeAnn Thieman

Contents

Cover
About the Authors
Title Page
Dedication
Introduction
Share with Us

1. THE BIRTH OF A GRANDMA

Babies, Boredom and Bliss *Janet Hall Wigler*

By Any Other Name *Carol McAdoo Rehme*

A Grandmother Is Born *Sally Friedman*

The Longest Week *Teresa Pitman*

She Looks Just Like ... *Margaret Lang*

Someone's Grandmother *Valerie A. Horner*

A Grandmother Again *Harriet May Savitz*

What Will I Call You? *Ruth Hancock*

Love at First Sight *Laura Lawson*

Loving Lauren *Rachel R. Patrick*

And Then There Was Hailey *Patricia Lorenz*

2. GENERATIONS OF LOVE

Oohoo *Debra D. Peppers*

One Lonely Little Boy *Roger Kiser*

The Lincoln Zephyr at Midnight *Kathryn Kimzey Judkins*

The Fabric of Love *Deborah Shouse*

A Legacy of Love *Libby C. Carpenter*

My Official Storybook Grandma *Michelle Rocker*

Deposition Stew *Bobbi Carducci*

Thanks *Stephen D. Rogers*
Aunt Tooty *Elayne Clift*
If It's Tuesday *Alice Malloy*
A Day at Grandmom's House *Harriet May Savitz*
This Ain't No Bull *Joanie Gilmore*
Everything but the Kitchen Sink *Nadia Ali*
Trying Times and Dirty Dishes *Cynthia M. Hamond*
A Thank-You Note to Grandma *Gina Antonios*

3. BLESSINGS

A Holy Moment *Sheila S. Hudson*
Grandma's Prayers *Sharon Ozee Siweck*
Angel in the Clouds *Jean Kinsey*
Parting Gifts *Marcia Swearingen*
A Teenager's Song for Gramma *Angela Thieman-Dino*
Love and Water *Emily Sue Harvey*
The Perspective of a Pansy *Laura L. Smith*
Red and White Carnations *Barbara Hibsichman*
The Feeling *Ellie Braun-Haley*
Picked Just for You *Bonnie Hanson*
Shiny Red Shoes *Bettye Martin-McRae*
Monday Night Tea *Delores Christian Liesner*

4. ADVENTURES WITH GRANDMA

Outing with Gram *Delores Christian Liesner*
Grandma Days *Maria Harden*
Afternoon Delight *Diane M. Vanover*
Two Dedicated Grandmas *Janet Lynn Mitchell*
Go-Cart Grandma *Patricia Lorenz*
Surf's Up, Grama *Pam Trask*
Grandma and the Snow Bank *Ann Kirk Shorey*
Grandma's River *Melodie Lynn Tilander*
Journey Home *Renee Hixson*
Travels with Grandma *Phyllis W. Zeno*
Going Places *Carolyn Mott Ford*
Will He Remember? *Maria Harden*

5. THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

Love Never to Be Blinded *Nancy V. Bennett*

Pennies from Heaven *Emily Erickson*

Dusting in Heaven *Denise Peebles*

Healing *Jennifer Oliver*

I Will Remember *Shelley Ann Wake*

Love's Labors Found *Sally Friedman*

God's Hands *Shirley Pope Waite*

God's Good Time *Cynthia M. Hamond*

Jenny's Antique *Harriet May Savitz*

Sandwich Generation *Tricia Short*

Secret Weapon *Jennifer Oliver*

The Wooden Spoon *Beverly Houseman*

Out of the Mouths of Babes *Jane Elsdon*

6. GRANDMA'S LESSONS

Granny's Journey *Ruth Hancock*

Confidence *Jody Walters*

The Pine Tree *Kimberly Ripley*

Grandma's Cake *Norma Favor*

Frozen Water ... Melted Hearts *Cheri Lynn Cowell*

Nana *Susan Farr-Fahncke*

Grandmother's Quiet Addiction *Nancy V. Bennett*

Like the Turtle *Erin Hoffman*

Nan *Rachel Wallace-Oberle*

Gram's Garden *Paula Mauqiri Tindall*

Digging in the Dirt *Linda Apple*

The True Lesson of Homework *Sally Friedman*

I Can Make It Grow *Betty King*

Motherhood 202 *Nancy Gibbs*

7. GIFTS FROM GRANDMA

Unexpected Gift *J. Kenneth Kreider*

Grandma's Attic Treasures *Anne Johnson*

A Quilted Life *Julie Dunbar*

Sister Said *Jean Jeffrey Gietzen*

Gifts of the Heart *Renie Burghardt*
Marking Time *Shirley Jump*
Green Ink *Laura Smith*
Timeless Generosity *Patti Lawson*
Grandma's Surprise Party *Stephanie "Stacy" Thompson*
A Grandmother's Gifts *Sally Friedman*
Star of the Week *Bonnie S. Grau*
My Present *Barbara G. Drotar*
Grandma Wanda *John McCaslin*
Rocks and Restoration *Kathleen Craft Boehmig*

8. LEGACIES AND HEIRLOOMS

Grandma's Words *Laura Mueller*
Grandmother's Language of Love *Trudy Reeder*
Gutsy Grandma *Karen J. Olson*
Treasured Gift *Cookie Curci*
More Than an Heirloom *Susan Chesser Branch*
A Leap of Faith *Hannah Amgott*
The Locket *Tal Aviezer and Jason Cocovinis*
Grandma's Necklace *Carol Spahr*
A Sister's Visit *Paula Mauqiri Tindall*
The Wrecking Crew *K. K. Choate*

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Who Is Jack Canfield?

Jack Canfield is one of America's leading experts in the development of human potential and personal effectiveness. He is both a dynamic, entertaining speaker and a highly sought-after trainer. Jack has a wonderful ability to inform and inspire audiences toward increased levels of self-esteem and peak performance. Jack most recently released a book for success entitled *The Success Principles: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*.

He is the author and narrator of several bestselling audio- and videocassette programs, including *Self-Esteem and Peak Performance*, *How to Build High Self-Esteem*, *Self-Esteem in the Classroom* and *Chicken Soup for the Soul—Live*. He is regularly seen on television shows such as *Good Morning America*, *20/20* and *NBC Nightly News*. Jack has co-authored numerous books, including the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, *Dare to Win* and *The Aladdin Factor* (all with Mark Victor Hansen), *100 Ways to Build Self-Concept in the Classroom* (with Harold C. Wells), *Heart at Work* (with Jacqueline Miller) and *The Power of Focus* (with Les Hewitt and Mark Victor Hansen).

Jack is a regularly featured speaker for professional associations, school districts, government agencies, churches, hospitals, sales organizations and corporations. His clients have included the American Dental Association, the American Management Association, AT&T, Campbell's Soup, Clairol, Domino's Pizza, GE, Hartford Insurance, ITT, Johnson & Johnson, the Million Dollar Roundtable, NCR,

New England Telephone, Re/Max, Scott Paper, TRW and Virgin Records. Jack has taught on the faculty of Income Builders International, a school for entrepreneurs.

Jack conducts an annual seven-day training called Breakthrough to Success. It attracts entrepreneurs, educators, counselors, parenting trainers, corporate trainers, professional speakers, ministers and others interested in improving their lives and the lives of others.

For free gifts from Jack and information on all his material and availability go to:

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Who Is Mark Victor Hansen?

In the area of human potential, no one is more respected than Mark Victor Hansen. For more than thirty years, Mark has focused solely on helping people from all walks of life reshape their personal vision of what's possible. His powerful messages of possibility, opportunity and action have created powerful change in thousands of organizations and millions of individuals worldwide.

He is a sought-after keynote speaker, bestselling author and marketing maven. Mark's credentials include a lifetime of entrepreneurial success and an extensive academic background. He is a prolific writer with many bestselling books, such as *The One Minute Millionaire*, *The Power of Focus*, *The Aladdin Factor* and *Dare to Win*, in addition to the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. Mark has had a profound influence through his library of audios, videos and articles in the areas of big thinking, sales achievement, wealth building, publishing success, and personal and professional development.

Mark is the founder of the MEGA Seminar Series. MEGA Book Marketing University and Building Your MEGA Speaking Empire are annual conferences where Mark coaches and teaches new and aspiring authors, speakers and experts on building lucrative publishing and speaking careers. Other MEGA events include MEGA Marketing Magic and My MEGA Life.

He has appeared on television (*Oprah*, CNN and *The Today Show*), in print (*Time*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *USA Today*, *New York Times* and *Entrepreneur*) and on

countless radio interviews, assuring our planet's people that "You can easily create the life you deserve."

As a philanthropist and humanitarian, Mark works tirelessly for organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, American Red Cross, March of Dimes, Childhelp USA and many others. He is the recipient of numerous awards that honor his entrepreneurial spirit, philanthropic heart and business acumen. He is a lifetime member of the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, an organization that honored Mark with the prestigious Horatio Alger Award for his extraordinary life achievements.

Mark Victor Hansen is an enthusiastic crusader for what's possible and is driven to make the world a better place.

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Who Is LeAnn Thieman?

LeAnn Thieman is a nationally acclaimed professional speaker, author and nurse who was “accidentally” caught up in the Vietnam orphan airlift in 1975. Her book *This Must Be My Brother* details her daring adventure helping to rescue three hundred babies as Saigon was falling to the Communists. An ordinary person, she struggled through extraordinary circumstances and found the courage to succeed. LeAnn and her incredible story have been featured in *Newsweek* magazine’s “Voices of the Century” issue, FOX-TV News, PAX-TV’s *It’s A Miracle*, NPR, BBC and countless radio and TV programs around the world.

Today, as a renowned motivational speaker, she shares life-changing lessons learned from her airlift experience. Believing we all have individual “war zones,” LeAnn inspires audiences to balance their lives, truly live their priorities and make a difference in the world.

After her story was featured in *Chicken Soup for the Mother’s Soul*, LeAnn became one of *Chicken Soup*’s most prolific writers, with stories in eleven more *Chicken Soup* books. That and her devotion to thirty years of nursing made her the ideal coauthor of *Chicken Soup for the Nurse’s Soul*. Her lifelong practice of her Christian faith led her to coauthor *Chicken Soup for the Christian Woman’s Soul*. All of the above earned her the honor of coauthoring *Chicken Soup for the Caregiver’s Soul*, *Chicken Soup for the Father and Daughter Soul* and now *Chicken Soup for the Grandmother’s Soul*.

LeAnn is one of approximately ten percent of speakers worldwide to have earned the Certified Speaking Professional Designation awarded by the National Speakers Association and the International Federation for professional speakers.

LeAnn and Mark, her husband of thirty-five years, reside in Colorado, where they enjoy their “empty nest.” Their two daughters, Angela and Christie, and son Mitch have “flown the coop” but are still drawn under their mother’s wing when she needs them!

For more information about LeAnn’s books and tapes or to schedule her for a presentation, please contact her at:

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CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE GRANDMOTHER'S SOUL

**Stories to honour and celebrate
the ageless love of
grandmothers**

Jack Canfield
Mark Victor Hansen
LeAnn Thieman

Vermilion
LONDON

To Anna, Gertrude, Shirlee, Blanche, Rhoda and all the
grandmas of the world who blessed not only our heritage,
but our hearts.

Introduction

When our children left the nest, we breathed a sigh of relief for a child-rearing job well done. Thankfully that reprieve was short-lived, for just when we thought we could never love another as deeply as our own, our child places their child into our arms ... and the lay-down-my-life-for-you love starts all over again. Nothing in this world can prepare us for this moment, and nothing can compare as this child of our child steals our breath and our hearts. Then we watch as the baby's great-grandmother—our mother—embraces this miracle, bearing witness to this ageless mystery of maternal love. Happily we resume the work of caring for a child—but this time with less stress and even more fun! The dance of life goes on—the family circle grows.

Chicken Soup for the Soul applauds how grandmas bless all our lives, and we are honored to bless theirs. These true stories bring hope and happiness to those who caress us, not only with their hands but with their hearts. *Chicken Soup for the Grandmother's Soul* celebrates the love and joy only a grandma can know. Whether she's rocking or rock-and-rolling, knitting or surfing, hugging or hiking, every grandma will find herself in these loving, laughing, even life-saving stories.

On behalf of all the lives they've touched and changed forever, we say thank you!

Share with Us

We invite you to send us stories you would like to see published in future editions of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*.

We would also love to hear your reactions to the stories in this book. Please let us know what your favorite stories are and how they affected you.

Please send submissions to our Web site:

www.chickensoup.com

or mail to:

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We hope you enjoy reading this book as much as we enjoyed compiling, writing and editing it.

1

THE BIRTH OF A GRANDMA

SOON I WILL be an old, white-haired lady into whose lap someone places a baby, saying, "Smile, Grandma!" I, who myself so recently was photographed on my grandmother's lap.

Liv Ullmann

Babies, Boredom and Bliss

WHEN A CHILD is born, so is a grandmother.

Judith Levy

“We’re not going in there, are we?” I asked, appalled, looking inside the baby store my friend was determined to enter. I’d come a long way to visit ... hundreds of miles, and she wanted to shop in a baby store? Quite frankly, I found those kinds of stores boring, the way I found most babies boring. I’d never been accused of being enthusiastic over little creatures who couldn’t walk, talk or do anything except scream, make a mess and demand all of one’s attention.

Turning on the well-worn heel of her running shoe, my friend shot me a steely look. “We won’t be long,” she promised, striding into the store.

Unhappily I trailed after her. *She’s changed*, I thought grumpily as I stifled a yawn and tottered through the crammed aisles on my high heels. *Definitely changed*, I thought sourly as she spent the next two hours oohing and aahing over everything to do with infants until I thought I’d go insane.

What can I say in defense of my once-glamorous friend, who now smelled of spit-up and stumbled tiredly through the store misty-eyed with joy?

She’d become a grandmother.

That fact was responsible for her gleeful preoccupation with the world of little things, the reason she didn't have time to dye the gray in her hair, the reason she'd traded in her classic clothing for jogging gear, the reason she didn't seem able to talk about anything. Except babies. And most particularly, one little grandbaby.

After helping cram purchases into every nook and cranny of her car, I reminded my friend of a lunch date with our high school girlfriends at a hot new restaurant that featured elegant dining in an atmosphere that catered to people like me—tourists with hard-earned time and money to spend, who wanted to be pampered in a child-free environment.

I squeezed into the passenger side of the car, holding a huge teddy bear on my lap, thankful that soon I'd be in a world of my peers where conversation would veer toward spas, salons and shopping.

But I was sadly, pathetically mistaken. No sooner did we get to the restaurant than my friend took out her wallet and proceeded to spread pictures of her grandson over the gleaming table, expecting us to ooh and aah over the bald-headed tyke with the toothless smile. Every woman did. Including the waitress.

But not me.

What's the matter? I thought, depressed. *Am I the only woman on the planet who dislikes baby talk?* It wasn't that I didn't like babies. I did. I'd borne and raised one myself. Lisa had turned into a lovely young woman. Intelligent, kind, ambitious. We had a good relationship based on respect, love and mutual interests. But I had never been what one could call maternal. And what's more, my friend never had been either, I thought, glaring at her over a glass of wine. I couldn't understand what had happened to her.

We'd been teenage mothers together. We'd married and grown up with our daughters together. Together as single mothers we'd struggled in a world where we tried to fit

work and relationships and parenting all in one. We'd been the best of friends.

What had happened to bring us apart?

I could only think of one thing. One word. Actually, two words. Grand. Mother.

What was so grand about that? I thought irately.

Months later, my daughter called. "Mom, guess what?"

I was filing my nails with one hand and juggling the phone with the other, trying not to smear my facial pack.

"I'm going to have a baby!"

The phone slid down my face as visions of gray hair and sweatpants filled my mind, and the sounds of squawking at all hours of the day and night filled my ears. I tasted weariness as I imagined trundling after an infant who needed smelly diapers changed while testing formula to feed a hungry, wailing new soul.

New soul.

I burst into tears.

"Are you glad? Or are you mad?" Lisa shouted into the phone. With trembling fingers I juggled the receiver and said through a throat suddenly gone dry, "I'm not sure." Silently I tried out the unfamiliar label. Grandma. "When's the due date?" I whispered hoarsely.

"Christmas day!"

Christmas in Seattle.

I flew over on the twenty-third. Lisa met me at the airport. Beaming. Huge. I remembered how that felt. Remembered how ... how wonderful it was! How joyful! How expectant! For the second time since I heard the news I burst into tears.

On December twenty-sixth Bronwyn entered the world and stole my breath, my heart, my soul. My entire identity. "Let Grandma hold her!" I shouted, almost knocking my poor son-in-law off his feet as I snatched my granddaughter out of his arms. I looked down into her precious, angelic face and ... burst into tears.

Over the next few days I fought like a dragon to hold her, feed her, change her. I shopped in the local supermarket with my hair pulled into an untidy ponytail, dark smudges under my eyes from day-old mascara, sleepless nights and sentimental weeping.

As I sat in the market's deli, rocking Bronwyn in my arms and trying not to get spit-up on my jogging suit, I reflected on my new heart, new eyes, new senses. And I knew that up until the day she'd come into the world, I had been blind. The miracle of her birth had wrought a miracle in me, one I could not get enough of. Babies. I planned to call my friend to see if she'd be available to go shopping next time I was in town. There were some baby stores I was eager to visit. I hoped she'd bring photos.

I couldn't wait to show her mine.

Janet Hall Wigler

By Any Other Name

*WHAT IS IN a name? That which we call a rose, by
any other name would smell as sweet.*

William Shakespeare

Contemplating my impending role as grandparent, I spent countless hours and multiple conversations debating what my new grandchild should call me. After all, this was a big decision: a sacred moniker—set in stone—to be used by countless future grandchildren.

I mused over the merits and disadvantages of various names, rolling them around my tongue, tasting them, savoring them—trying them on for size. *Grandmother?* Too formal. *Grandma?* Mundane. *Nana?* Nah.

From the quirky *Punkin'* to the colloquial *Gran*, the whimsical *Oma* to the formal *Grandma-ma* (with an elegant accent on the last syllable), I experimented with them all.

“Give it up,” said my more experienced girlfriends. “That first grandbaby will call you what she will. And, anyway, the actual name won’t matter. Why, you’ll be so thrilled, it won’t matter *what* she calls you. Trust us,” they nodded in agreement. “You won’t care.”

Well, grandbaby Avery turned one and my daughter put her on the phone so I could hear her chatter across the two thousand miles separating us. I knew this verbose babe’s burgeoning repertoire now included words like drink, ball,

banana, hi and even the names of several animals. With any luck ...

"Hello, sweet pea," I gushed. "Happy birthday!"

"Avery, say 'hi' to Grammy," my daughter coaxed at the other end. "Say 'hi.'"

And then it happened. It really happened. A precious, breathy little voice pulled together two words from her vocabulary and cooed into the phone, "Hi, dog."

My daughter giggled, then erupted into a full laugh—and baby Avery repeated her new achievement with enthusiasm, delighted that it appeared to make her mommy so happy.

"Hi dog, hi dog, hi dog."

Huh, I laughed, my girlfriends were wrong. I care. I care *a lot*.

Carol McAdoo Rehme

A Grandmother Is Born

*OF ALL THE joys that lighted the suffering earth,
what joy is welcomed like a newborn child?*

Caroline Norton

It's the phone call I've been awaiting for nine long months, yet when it comes, it's still a shock.

"This is it," our son-in-law says with a certain catch in his voice. "Jill's in labor."

And so the adventure begins. On the ride to the hospital, my husband and I cannot speak. For a man and woman who are about to become grandparents for the first time, it's all been said. All the fervent prayers for a healthy, whole baby already have been issued up to a higher power.

So we ride in silence, the silence of apprehension, excitement and joy waiting to explode.

At the birthing suite, all is surreal. While the rest of the inhabitants of planet Earth go about their business and pleasure on this brilliantly sunny afternoon, the entire world, for me, is enclosed within the walls of this waiting area.

My husband tries to read.

I pace in an unlikely caricature of those fathers-in-waiting from the Neanderthal days when mothers labored alone. Suddenly, I understand how those fathers must have felt.

Every now and then the midwife appears with a “bulletin.” Those bulletins take on the breathless significance of a pronouncement about the future of world peace.

An hour passes. Two. Three. “Soon,” our son-in-law tells us breathlessly in his one and only break from being on-site labor coach.

And at 3:42 on an ordinary afternoon, standing at the door of a modern birthing suite, I hear a cry. A baby’s cry.

My heart stops.

Nothing in the world could have prepared me for this moment. Nothing will ever be the same for me in this glorious universe.

Today, I am somebody’s grandmother!

Hannah—all seven pounds, thirteen ounces of her—has burst into the world.

I meet her moments later and fall madly, desperately, hopelessly in love. Nestled in my daughter’s arm is this child of my child, a perfect pink and white miniature. I weep and laugh and thank God for allowing us this moment, this gift, this day.

Time is suspended. It is the deepest, most profound privilege to watch these new parents as they cuddle their baby daughter and explore her incredibly sweet face, her silky skin, her downy head.

Our son-in-law’s parents are as speechless as we are. Hannah is the “we” of their son and our daughter, made tangible. In this room, on this day, we all know that this infant is our link to immortality. And this gritty, urban hospital suddenly feels holy.

It is another spectacular moment when I watch Hannah’s great-grandmother—my own mother—meet her. I bear joyous witness to the awesome, incredible continuity of life’s longing for itself.

Later, her new aunts and uncles greet Hannah, laugh joyously at her perfection, and touch her tiny, tiny hand.

We are dumbstruck, overwhelmed subjects of this tiny empress, and she seems to revel in the attention on this first day of her life.

This being, after all, the age of technology, the moments are dutifully recorded on video camera. Someday, we will watch—and laugh at our foolishness.

But for this day, it is totally acceptable to worship at the bedside of Hannah and to marvel at the new life that begins with the love of a man and a woman.

Despite all we enlightened moderns know of the biology of life—despite all the excesses of this Information Age—the wonder is the same. The awe remains undiminished.

A baby is born. The universal family of man—and our family—grows once again.

It is as old as time and as new as tomorrow's dawn.

The dance of life goes on. The circle grows.

And a dazed, overwhelmed new grandmother tiptoes out of a room where a miracle has happened, wondering how she ever got to be so lucky.

Sally Friedman

The Longest Week

*A SWEET NEW blossom of humanity, fresh fallen
from God's own home, to flower the earth.*

Gerald Massey

It was a wintry Saturday morning and I was still asleep when the phone rang, but the urgency in Matthew's voice startled me awake.

"Esmaralda's water broke," my oldest son told me. "We think she's in labor."

I felt my heart sink. As a longtime childbirth educator and breastfeeding counselor, I knew all too well the potential risks and challenges of a baby born two months early.

We spent the next hours walking the halls of the hospital as Esmaralda's contractions grew ever stronger. Finally, the midwife knelt in front of her, Matthew sat behind her supporting her back, and Esmaralda's mother and I took our places, one on either side, holding her legs. In just a few pushes, the baby emerged—pink and healthy, a beautiful boy.

Beautiful, yes, but oh-so-incredibly tiny. Sebastian Rhys Pitman weighed just four pounds, six ounces.

Esmaralda's face glowed with joy as she held him against her. But within minutes, his breathing began to falter. We could see him struggling to take in each breath,

and newborn Sebastian was moved to the nursery and placed in an incubator.

I was a grandma! But although I'd been there to rejoice in his arrival, I had barely seen, let alone touched, my new grandson, and my heart ached with worry.

By midnight we had even more to worry about. His breathing had continued to deteriorate, and eventually the pediatrician decided Sebastian needed to be transferred to a larger hospital where he could be placed on a respirator. An ambulance arrived to take him away, and a team of health-care professionals put tubes down his nose and throat and hooked him up to monitors for the trip. It scared us all to see this tiny, scrawny baby with so much of his little body covered by tubes and wires.

There wasn't room for my son in the ambulance, so I drove him to the hospital, an hour away. Matthew's a foot taller than me, but he leaned his head against my shoulder and wept as we drove through the dark and snowy night.

We were fortunate there was a Ronald McDonald House next to this larger hospital, offering a place to stay for parents whose children had been admitted. It became Matthew and Esmaralda's home for the next few weeks as Sebastian struggled to stay alive. They spent most of their time sitting alongside his incubator, talking and singing to him so he would know he was not alone.

The nurses encouraged his parents to participate in Sebastian's care from the beginning. He was too frail to tolerate much handling and needed to be on the respirator to keep him breathing, but when his diapers needed changing or when he needed to come out of the incubator for a few minutes, Esmaralda and Matthew were the ones who changed and held him.

I longed to cuddle him just once, but I knew that it was far more important for his parents to have that connection with him. I remembered how hard it was for me, as a new mother, to hand over my baby to someone else. I didn't

want to steal even one minute of the precious time these new parents had to hold their son.

I could be patient. But my arms ached to hold him.

I was used to being the mother—the one who had that very intimate connection with the baby. I didn't know yet how to be a grandmother, and it was hard feeling relegated to the sidelines. Maybe if I held him just once, I'd feel more like a real grandma.

But I could be patient. I saw the happiness in Esmaralda's eyes as Sebastian responded to her touch and her voice, familiar to him from the months before he was born. I would wait.

After four days, he was growing stronger. He began to breathe on his own, and the respirator tube was removed and replaced with a smaller oxygen tube. The nurses began to feed him the breast milk Esmaralda had pumped, and she was able to hold him longer each day.

I continued to drive there daily to encourage them and to marvel in Sebastian's progress. Sometimes, as Esmaralda cuddled him to her, I would stroke his tiny hand or gently touch a foot that peeked out from the blanket. But my arms ached to hold him.

When he was a week old, the nurses informed us that he was almost ready to return to the hospital in the small town where we lived and he had been born. Yes, he still needed to be kept warm and fed by a tube for a few more weeks before he could come home, but he no longer needed all the special equipment.

As we celebrated this good news with smiles and hugs, the nurse said, "Now that he can be out of the incubator longer, would Grandma like a turn holding him?"

Would I? Would I?! I'd dreamed of little else for the past seven days.

I settled myself in the rocking chair and the nurse handed him to me. He was so light in my arms ... such a tiny bundle. But he nuzzled his face against me and

snuggled close. I felt a rush of love and emotion surge through me, and the tears flowed down my cheeks. Here he was, my beautiful little grandson, in my arms at last, breathing on his own and healthy and one step closer to coming home. I couldn't speak. All I could do was cry. My arms no longer ached as I held him near and took in the magic of the moment as I held him for the very first time.

Teresa Pitman

She Looks Just Like ...

A MAN FINDS room in a few square inches of his face for the traits of all his ancestors; for the expression of all his history, and his wants.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

As I gazed in awe at my newborn granddaughter, all I could think about was the wonder of God's handiwork—until I heard the words, "She's *all* her mother, even her toes." Each word was spoken with emphasis, followed by an echo, "Yes, even her toes," as if that was the final word on the subject.

I stood outnumbered in a sea of in-laws. Gazing at the ten tiny pieces of evidence before the court of family opinion, I failed to see the referenced genetic code etched in such delicate pink appendages.

Can't my son claim even one little toe for our family? I silently cried out.

I had no idea what it would be like to be a first-time grandma. All my friends said it was the most wonderful experience in the world. So far my experience wasn't going too well.

Slowly, the in-laws' convictions got to me. I left the hospital with one prevailing thought: *I guess I'm a grandma of another family's baby.*

The personal grandma chamber in my heart closed up. After waiting thirty years, it had flowed with grandma's