

# Mother

by Bobbi Lewis

I held Mother's tired, wrinkled hand for the last time as I reminisced about my life with her. I wondered if I appreciated enough, or let her know how much I loved her.

"Mommy, do Evan and I look like twins? When will he get up from his nap? Will you read Cinderella one more time? Can we go outside, and will you push me in the swing? Mommy, am I really a princess? When I grow up, can I wear your earrings? I'm scared to go into Kindergarten alone, will you go with me? Is it against the law for five year olds not to learn to ride a bike? I love you, Mommy."

"Mom, Katie and I are going to the dance on Friday; can I get a new dress? Evan has been snooping in my room again. Mom, can you make him stay out of my stuff? But I don't want braces. My teeth aren't even that bad. Dad's music is so loud. I swear, I'm beginning to hate Madonna. Mom, I need \$40.00 for a yearbook before Tuesday. The game has been changed to Saturday, and all the cheerleaders have to be there by 5:30. No, I don't want to ask anyone else for a ride; I want you to take me. I can't wait until I get my driver's license. I have homework. I can't help with dishes tonight. I don't like barbecued chicken anyway. You are so weird."

"What do you mean I have to be in by 11:30? Katie doesn't have a curfew. Every senior gets to stay out later than I do. That is so dumb. I can't wait until I'm out of this house, so I can make my own decisions. Prom is in two weeks. Can I go to the tanning bed? Why not? Everybody does. You have to know where I am every minute of the day. Don't you trust me? I'll probably pick a college three states away. I hate you sometimes."

"Momma, should I order those red shoes to wear for graduation? I like them, but I don't want to fall when I walk across the stage to get my diploma. Thank you for supporting me and encouraging me through college, Momma. You're the best. I don't know if I'm actually ready to move out on my own, Momma. It's a little scary with a new house, new job, and bills

to pay. I think I'll come over and watch TV with you and Dad tonight. Ok, I'll spend the night too."

"Mom, do you think Dad likes Chet? Do you think I should marry him? I wanted to find a man just like my Daddy. I trust your judgment, but I'm confused. My cable bill was \$88.00 this month. Let's go watch a movie this weekend. Katie is coming in town for a visit. She's bringing her baby, and we are just going to hang out, look through old pictures, eat cookie dough, and play with the baby tonight. Love you."

"Don't leave me, Mommy. I want my children to know their grandmother. I still need you. Who will I talk to? Why can't you get well? I imagined us together for many more years to come. I know you are weak and weary, and cancer has taken over your precious body, so I understand if you must go. I am letting you go, Mom. I love you."

Mother released my hand and closed her eyes.