

Awakened to Love in the Moment

The three little kittens, they lost their mittens and they began to cry.

On a recent visit to see my mom, I found her asleep. Fully clothed with her shoes on, a blue blanket covering her face, her white hair peeking out. She seemed content.

I came with a blue hydrangea flower from my garden. Her favorite flower. Her favorite color.

The purple polka dot bag I brought was filled with possibilities. A nursery rhyme book, crayons, paper, rose cream, some colored stones and a doll. The funny thing: this was the same bag and contents I brought babysitting for my daughter's friend. The two and four year old children were delighted with the contents.

Mom eventually woke up and began to cry. In spite of the medications to alter her mood, she continues to shed a lot of tears. Vascular dementia is a long goodbye.

Oh, mother dear, we sadly fear our mittens we have lost.

When mom woke she didn't want to move and quietly wept as I sat beside her, massaging her hands and feet with the rose cream. This felt like a sacred act.

Her hands have pieced many quilts, sewn dozens of square dance dresses, all of her young daughters Easter dresses and prom dresses, and sailboat covers, knitted afghans, and created a business making Father Christmas figures. And now her hand holds mine when we walk. Always reaching out for my hand. Her hands aren't very reliable any more in holding a fork or spoon. She lets us feed her.

Her feet have pushed tandem pedals across England and PEI and back roads in Pennsylvania and Delaware. They have pushed carriages filled with her children and then her grandchildren. Walked miles and miles in all kinds of stores, shopping and shopping. Her feet have stood in the salty bay raking in clams and pulling grandchildren over the waves. Now she shuffles when she walks.

What! Lost your mittens, you naughty kittens! Then you shall have no pie

Mom pushed off her cover but was not interested in eating or getting up. Her tears continued. Gone are the times when it was easy to distract her. She gets in the groove

and the tears continue.

Nurses come in and out to check on her. All is well. But is it really? I go to the place of imagining she is working on something and these tears are useful. After all, there are studies that show tears bring healing. I know I feel better after a good cry. Has she been saving these up and now there is no stopping them? I wonder. Fixing is not an option. But I can sit beside her and be a witness to her tears, holding her in my arms and loving her. I can do that.

The three little kittens, they found their mittens and they began to cry

I open the book of children's rhymes and begin to read. Then for some reason I read *the three little kittens* over and over again. Something awakens in her. There is an alertness in her eyes. She mouths some of the words. I continue. Over and over. Just like I did with my children when they requested "again! again!"

Rhythm brings comfort. Her crying subsides. She looks at me and sits up to admire the blue hydrangea.

Oh, mother dear, see here, see here, our mittens we have found.

Mom, she is still here. I hold her, I dance with her, I walk with her, and I sit with her. She is still here and yet, I miss her terribly.

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August 2019