



My Mother died on the 7th of September, in 2014.

Her birthday was the 7th of January.

Today is the 7th of January ... Mama's first birthday, following her death.

After a full day of work, I decided to go for a bike ride early this evening. I grabbed my iPod, put on my headsets and set off down the road.

Two songs into the shuffle, there was Sinéad O'Connor singing "Three Babies." Oh my word! It was like Mama talking to her three babies.

I can't remember the last time I heard that song. Truly ... what are the odds it would show-up in the shuffle today?

Was this a voice from the graveyard?

Although I'm sure Mama never heard the song herself, Sinéad's love words—except for a few lines which absolutely don't fit—could have come from our Mum. I felt like she was talking to the three of us from beyond the grave:

Three Babies

*Each of these
My three babies
I will carry with me
For myself
I ask no one else will be
Mother to these three*

*And of course
I'm like a wild horse
But there's no other way I could be
Water and feed
Are not tools that I need
For the thing that I've chosen to be*

*In my soul
My blood and my bones
I have wrapped your cold bodies 'round me
The face on you
The smell of you
Will always be with me*

*Each of these
My three babies
I was not willing to leave
Though I tried
I blasphemed and denied
I know they will be returned to me*

*Each of these
My babies
Have brought you closer to me
No longer mad like a horse
I'm still wild but not lost
From the thing that I've chosen to be*

*And it's 'cause you've thrilled me
Silenced me
Stilled me
Proved things I never believed
The face on you
The smell of you
Will always be with me*

*Each of these
My three babies
I will carry with me
For myself
I ask no one else will be
Mother to these three*

I had to stop riding my bike. My sunglasses were totally fogged-up.

During those stopped moments, and after, I thought about Mama.

To her, even when we three became responsible adults, we were still her three babies. She loved each one unconditionally.

Every day, since she died, I have thought about her. When something happens, I reach for the phone to call her. Then I remember ... she's no longer there to listen.

I can listen to *her*, though.

Some years ago, I decided to save some of her voice messages. I'd listen to them when I was traveling for work, in different time zones (when it was too late to ring her). It was good to hear her endlessly encouraging words.

When I changed phones, I made sure those old voice messages safely made the transfer. I'm really glad I did. Now it isn't the *words* I long to hear, it's just her *voice*.

After I returned from my bike ride, I listened to something else. I found a video of Sinéad, singing her "Three Babies" song, many years after it first became famous.

It still packs a wallop and today, for me, it produced a flood of tears.

Credits:

Image of Alberdean Berkenpas in her middle-aged years.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Missing-Mama>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Missing Mama

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