

Stephanie Read, whose husband Royce died in a cargo crash in New York in 2001, wrote this poem after his death.

When Time Began

I float, carelessly.

I am big.

I am beautiful.

I am light.

I am warm.

I am free.

I am love.

I am timeless.

I am oblivious....

To the outside world,

To people, things around me,

To my future.

I am complete.

Something is wrong.

They are confused.

I am confused.

What is happening?

I am dizzy.

I am drowning in fluids,

In my eyes, my nose, everywhere.

I am blind.

I can't breathe!

I am reborn.

I am different.

I am scared.

I am agonizing pain.

I am throbbing.

I am everywhere.

I want to go back,

Back to the warmth, to the love, to my oblivion.

Please, help me!

Help me get back!

Make this all go away!

Help me understand,

Help me believe,

Help me breathe!

Oh God, please! Why won't someone help me?

I am scared!

I am one day old.

I am aware of the world around me,

the people around me, the things around me.

I am loved.

I am pitied.

I am surrounded.

I am consumed.

I am numb.

I am a dream.

I am one week old.

*There are Others, like me.
I watch them cry, weep, suffer.
I watch them slip into hibernation,
disappear, descend into themselves.
I watch them fade into darkness.
I want to go, too.
I awake.... my body, arms, legs, torso, appendages,
Little extensions of myself,
My world,
My future.
They empower me to breathe, to wake, to eat, to be.
I am needed.
I am responsible.
I can't go.
I get up.*

I am one month old.

*People diminish, flowers wilt.
The Others awake and envelop me.
I am approachable.
I am helpful.
I am supportive.
I am therapy.
I am consolable.
I am alone.
I am tired.
I get up.*

I am two months old.

*Weeks and months wisp by.
I am busy.
I am festive.
I am cookies, cakes, and presents.
I am haunted.
I will not think.
I will hide in what's left of my world.
I watch them grow, develop, learn.
I will find warmth in my incomplete world.
I will find love, peace, contentment.
I am denial.
The darkness beckons me.
I get up.*

I am six months old.

*Time continues to find me.
I am pushed forward.
I am forgetful.
I am disappointing.
I am incomplete.*

*I am a moment of darkness.
I am lost in memory.
I remember.
I yearn.
I ache.
I desire.
Laughter and smiles run toward me.
I get up.*

I am nine months old.

*Friends and family counsel me.
"It is time to be whole, again."
Like it is a choice or a decision to be made.
I cannot regenerate.
I am content.
"It is time to let go. It is time to replace the missing piece."
I am unfinished.
I am deficient.
I am sorrow.
I am okay.*

I am one year old.

*Time dances eternally.
Laughter and pain crowd my memory.
I will go on.
I will always remember.
I will forever love.
My incomplete world continues to live, to laugh, to grow,
Timelessly,
Always and Forever.
I begin to float, carefully.*

Stephanie Read -
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