She stood transfixed in disbelief
Her expression filled with fear
Wide eyes surveyed the tiny babe
As they filled up... and then a tear
Spilled down her cheek.
As I opened the isolette
"You can touch her hand," I said.
Hesitantly, very hesitantly
Her finger touched lightly...
A tiny hand grasped tightly
She smiled through The Tears
Her name is "Ann," she said.

Carol Drozdowicz

DIVERSITY

People come from varying climes.
What's important in their lives?
Sons and daughters, husbands and wives.
Ways of worship, foods they eat
Rest and hygiene are needs to meet,
How do I communicate?
A smile, a nod, a touch will state.
Though not the same as you or me,
We all share in our need to be.

*Barbara Sorbello*

**NURSING - THE SEASONS OF MY LIFE**

Nursing is the spring of my life -
Each experience is fresh and new.
There's wonderment
Like flowers washed with morning dew.

Nursing is the summer of my life -
A time to perfect all I know.
There'd confidence
A world where I can grow.

Nursing is the autumn of my life -
Ablaze with experience rich and glowing.
There's compassion
From richness of caring and knowing.

Nursing is the winter of my life -
A tapestry, a mosaic of all I am.
There's challenge
To find the spring again.

*Charlotte Dison*

**BECAUSE I CARE...**

Because I care, I bring
hope to your hopelessness,
Because I care, I see you
as loving woman and mother
Because I care, I enter
your world with humility and respect
I honor your belief that
somehow I can help.
I live your caring with you.
to cry when sad
to howl with delight.
Because I care, I want to
be there with you and for you
in sharing your pain and joy.
Because you care, I can
care with you.
Caring creates meaning for you and I.

Daniel L. Little

BLUE...

I write in blue because it is the color of the sky and the ocean and because it is the color I feel inside as I grow through one of the most difficult times in my life...

The art of nursing helps me through these times though, because in caring for certain patients lately I have regained a kind of sense of faith that was lost.

I have been caring for some very ill men lately and because of their closeness to the super being we call "God" they seem to all be surviving the desperate, critical illness!

Their commonalties: A steadfast faith that "everything will be all right" and that "God loves me and will help me." They have begun to help me turn the dull blues in my heart into a bright, shiny blue as the one in the sky. I only pray to continue in my quest for the place they have achieved.

Carmen Prieto

CAMPOS

We arrive in our fancy blue van,
Smiles fade to tears
Which I am afraid to show.
Big brown eyes peer up at me
Asking who?
And what?
And why?

It is at least one hundred degrees
but the breeze makes the heat
almost bearable.
I scan beyond the gravel and shacks
to see a garden ---
where everything is green and glistening
in perfect, diagonal rows.
The sprinklers are spraying gallons of water
over this Eden ---
As I see the senorita with long
flowing black hair
turn on the faucet, filling her plastic bucket
spilling and splashing over ---
I see droplets on your face
And am ashamed to tell you who,
and what ---
and why.

Alysa Hilton

A STUDENT NURSE FIRST BATH

I remember walking down the hall hearing the hollowing and screeching screams coming out of a patient's room -
Surely they won't give that patient to me - I wouldn't know what to do with him -

My classmates and I jokingly, nervously call - "that one's going to be mine!" -

Surely they won't subject this patient to a fumbling unknowing novice nurse -

My instructor assigned us our patients to bathe -

to practice on - Yes that was my patient -

Surely she'd give me further instructions how to care for this man - lying in a fetal position, yelling, bellowing out those strange sounds -

His eyes were crystal clear blue - a young adult with all his limbs in painful contractures - looking at me, sending me a message
As a child on her mothers apron strings, I pleaded for more time - more experience but my instructor sent me back in with reassurance -

Surely you don't want me in here - his eyes so frightened - so devastating - so alone - very alone -

As I spoke to him, and I touched and caressed his body with a warm wash cloth, our eyes met and I learned from him what nursing is.
Miss Margaret opened her weary eyes. Lids heavy with pain, tired from months of suffering. Chemotherapy... Radiation...

Can't eat... Can't sleep... Can't walk any more. Her once beautiful face, glowing skin, strong body, has been ravaged by disease. But she is still beautiful.

I could see that she was being well cared for. Miss Margaret was clean, linens fresh, environment safe, IV running well, tube feeding intact, foley bag dependent, dressings clean and dry. What else could she need? I knew what I could do for her. We held hands and then I brushed her hair. Stroke after stroke, her soft downy hairs fluttered through the brush. I brushed gently, in a comforting rhythm. How important touch and physical comfort is. As I cared for her, I remembered my mother brushing my hair, and how special and cared for it made me feel. I am glad that Miss Margaret and I shared this moment. We both felt a time of peace and comfort.

Yes, she is still beautiful.

Grandchildren playing outside her window...
How can she live?
With a fist-sized cancer devouring her chest, perched there like an angry red beast.

Floors to wash, meals to cook...

How can she live?
No one else will change her dressing, blood sprays each time from open arterioles.

She gives motherly advice to the young nurse...

How can she live?
The daughter will change it, next visit, maggots debride the wound.
She loves her husband for fifty years... almost...

How can she live?
Brain metastasis? She is afraid. She cries - no golden wedding.
Invisible black cats outside.

One day before fifty, her husband suddenly dies...

How can she live?
In peace. No more black cats.
Her husband smiles at her, outside her window.

Marcia Dombro

---

I SEE YOUR FEAR

I see your fear.
I sense your loss.
I can hold your hand.
    I cannot talk.
Yet we communicate.
Love has no barriers... nursing... giving!
Our needs are met.
"You can get pregnant again."
has no business here.
Our touch, our tears, our sharing
to start our grieving
and start living... again.

Rosa Noguera

---

A FRIENDLY SMILE

A friendly smile
in a new place
A soothing voice
in a fearful time<

A calming stroke
in a painful time.
A reassuring face
in a frightful moment.

A skillful hand
to perform a task
An alert mind
to keep on track.

Compounded with
love and compassion
this is what
nursing is all about.

Zoila Davis

GOOD MORNING

Good morning I say to you,
as I hold your hand and smile with you,
hoping to melt away all barriers,
hoping to bridge our spirits,
to care,
to nurture and together soar like eagles
over the day's challenges,
because...
I am your nurse.

Darla Brown Libby

DON'T TURN THE LIGHT OFF

"Don't tun the light off nurse -
I'm going to be in the dark a long time."

How can I respond?
It's a quiet night -
I can sit here and take your hand
and talk about the light
and beauty
and love in the place you're going.
We can talk about your loved ones,
your comfort,
your needs,
your life experiences,
Our life experiences -

Lead me to what you'd like to share and,
lets make this precious moment meaningful to both of us forever -

_Etha Miles_