



Robin Jones Gunn

Illustrated by Lauren Lowen

Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:

"Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all."

PROVERBS 31:28-29



a pocketful of for mothers

Robin Jones Gunn

Illustrated by Lauren Lowen

Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois





Living Expressions invites you to explore God's Word and express your creativity in ways that are refreshing to the spirit and restorative to the soul.

Visit Tyndale online at www.tyndale.com.

Visit the author's website at www.robingunn.com.

TNDALE and Tyndale's quill logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Living Expressions and the Living Expressions logo are trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

A Pocketful of Hope for Mothers

Copyright © 2018 by Robin's Nest Productions, Inc.

Illustrations by Lauren Lowen. Copyright © by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

Cover lettering by Koko Toyama, copyright © 2017 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

Hand-lettering fonts copyright © by Joanne Marie/Creative Market. All rights reserved.

Designed by Julie Chen

Edited by Janet Kobobel Grant

Published in association with the literary agency of Books & Such Literary Management, 52 Mission Circle, Suite 122, Santa Rosa, CA 95409

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked MSG are taken from THE MESSAGE, copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Scripture quotations marked NCV are taken from the New Century Version. © Copyright © 2005 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version, ® copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked TLB are taken from *The Living Bible*, copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Tyndale House Publishers at csresponse@tyndale.com, or call I-800-323-9400.

ISBN 978-1-4964-2556-0

Printed in China

24 23 22 21 20 19 18 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



Introduction: Where the Blue Feathers Hide vii

Part One—Now: Embracing the Newness of MomLife

This Just Got Real 2 A Mother's Prayer for Sleep 5 Cuddles and Coos 6 Daily Exercise 8 Mercy in the Morning, Grace in the Evening 11 Daughter of Mine 16 Falling in Love 19 Love Lessons 21 More Than 22 Before-and-After Selfies 26 A True Mom 31 Sweet Dreams 32 First-Month Prayer 33 Your Beautiful Chaos 34 Mama Art 37 New Dreams 44 Her World 46 When Day Is Done 48

Taps 50

Mothering Alone 52
Aprons and Prayers 54
Havens 60
The Golden Rule of Golden Moments 65
What a Mother Thinks 69

Part Two—Then: Cherishing the Journey of MomLife

Waiting 73
Mothering by Heart 75
Rachel Elizabeth 79
The Wish beneath My Pillow 83
Wind Chasers 87
Giggles 90
Autumn Dance 91
My Five-Year-Old Warrior 94
The Wildflowers Are Gone 97
Deep, Cleansing Breaths 100
What a Mother Says 102
Holding Back Time 104
Fluffy Tea in the Tub 108
A Mother's Prayer for Wisdom 112





INTRODUCTION

Where the Blue Feathers Hide

Wy grandmother always kept a treasure or two in the pocket of her apron.

She made her aprons from colorful remnants of summer dresses and stitched them on her olive-green Singer sewing machine. Every apron had a front pocket that went all the way across like a kangaroo pouch.

My memories of her apron pockets seem to revolve around a roll of butterscotch Life Savers I'd almost always find when I slid my eager hand into her pocket. I'd hold up my discovery, and she'd peel back the waxy lining and offer me one of the sweets with a smile. Always with a smile.

One time I found a small pink seashell in her pocket. She told me a tiny creature had once lived inside that shell deep in the ocean. The animal moved out, and its little house tumbled all the way to shore,

where she discovered it on a winter morning walk. She bent over and whispered that the shell was mine. I could keep the small wonder.

I clutched that bit of mermaid's loot all afternoon. It spoke to me of worlds beyond my own and marvels yet to experience.

Another treasure I pulled from her pocket was a blue feather. I imagined some wondrous bird dropping the nearly weightless piece of beauty to flutter down, a gift from the sky, for my grandmother to scoop up and tuck into her pocket for me.

Years after my grandma went to heaven, my cousin Cindy sent me some of our grandma's belongings. In the box I found a delicate fan from Korea, a card with a handwritten verse on it, a glittery sweater pin, and one of her aprons. I put the apron on and slipped my hands into the pocket. The only treasure I found was memories. Invisible,

but still inspiring.

The apron is, at this very moment, in my kitchen towel drawer. The other gifts are tucked away with one of my grandma's journals. A hobby of hers was collecting witty remarks and poignant quotes along with her favorite Bible verses. She had lovely handwriting and was skilled at making smiley faces every couple of pages.

As I was sorting through my own collection of various stories, prose, and favorite verses for this book,

memories of my grandma and her aprons rested warmly in my thoughts. I smiled as I remembered the small treasures she collected and hid in her pocket, waiting for me to find them.

I don't have a roll of Life Savers hidden between these pages for you. You won't find a pink shell or a blue feather to clutch and marvel over. All I

have to give you, dear little mama, is words. Sweet words. True words. Words of hope.

You'll find my favorite Bible verses on motherhood along

with thoughtful quotes sprinkled throughout the two sections—"Now"

and "Then." In the Now section, you'll peer into the thoughts I've

shared in talks and through personal letters with young mothers in this generation. My favorite part of the Now section is the journal entries I penned as I watched our grown children welcome their own

babies into the world. The Then section contains excerpts from the journals I kept when our two children were young.

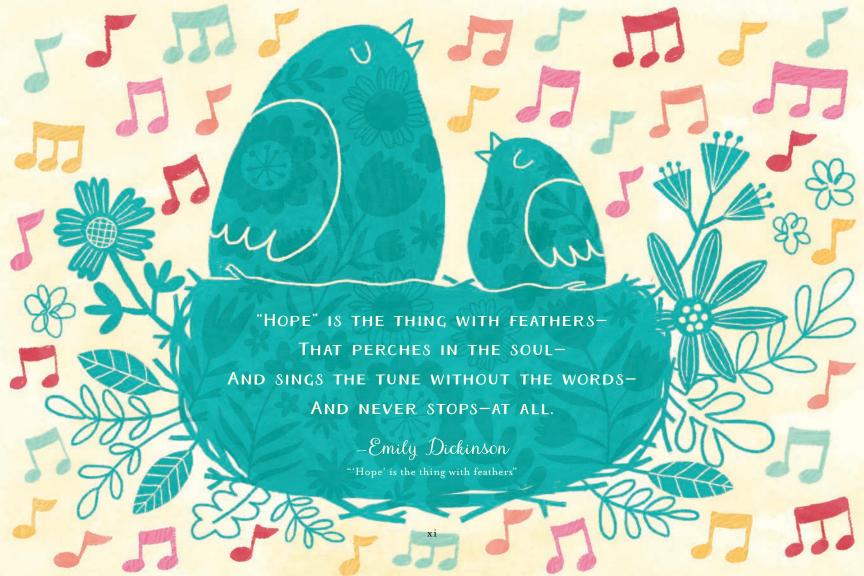
Go ahead. Slip your hand into this pocketful of hope, and know that the tiny treasures on these pages were put there for you. You will find sweet, full circles of shared experiences as mothers and perhaps a few simple wonders that your heart will clutch closely, prompting you to dream of realms beyond what you have yet seen.

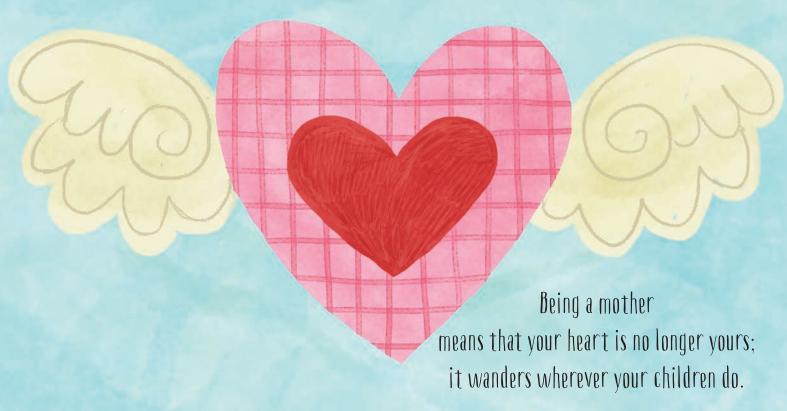
My Mama Robin prayer for you as you read this little book is that your mothering heart will be bolstered with courage and clarity.

And most of all hope.

When doubts filled my mind,
your comfort gave me renewed hope
and cheer.

PSALM 94:19, NIT





-ATTRIBUTED TO GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



MY HEART FLOATED ON A RIVER OF LOVE FOR YOU

UNTIL THE DAY YOU ARRIVED.

YOUR TINY FINGERS CURLED AROUND MINE,

AND MY WHOLE BEING WAS SWEPT INTO A SEA OF WONDER.

-RJG



This Just Got Real

Jook at you. You're a mother!

As prepared as you were for the grand arrival of your little one, nothing has been exactly as you thought it would be. And yet the moment you first kissed those pudgy cheeks, you felt it. A tremor and a thrill settled on you. This just got real.

You have been entrusted with a brand-new, tiny soul.

What do you do now?

May I share some simple thoughts that will help you navigate this new season?

Trust the instincts that God affixed to your DNA when He knit you together in your mother's womb.

Delight. Take delight in all the coos and wiggles. Marvel at the miracle for a long moment without allowing a single worry to cross your mind.

Dream. Dream of all the days ahead as you set sail with your wee one to an uncharted future on a sea of possibilities.

Hope. Above all, hold on to hope as you see yourself drifting further away from your former life and as the waves of emotions roll.

Hope will pour over you a fresh dose of courage every morning.

You are this child's mother. You are able. This is a blessing.

Hope will calm your spirit in the middle of the night.

You have done all you can. Your little one is asleep. Now you rest as well.

Hope will compel you to give all you have and then give a little more.

You can do this. You have resources inside that you haven't even tapped yet.

Take heart. Hold on to hope. The winds will blow. The storms will rage. But most days the sun will shine, and you will come to understand true love as you put your hope in God.

