

# She Isn't Mine

by [Kelly J. Beard](#) | Feb 27, 2018



My daughter is 26. Her baby is due in three days. And yet, when I say, “my daughter,” and “her baby,” I pause at the nub of untruth there. She is not mine. She never was. I was a brief caretaker only, not an owner. As she will be for the mysterious being she carries still. She imagines she knows this already, but looking at her from across her small, cluttered living room, her belly tight and round, I wonder. It’s a startle still, for me to understand the koan-like truth, that we are – and have always been – connected and separate. Looking back I see her first tiny declarations of independence at two and three (“No!” “I don’t want to!” and “Call me Rachel!”) as evidence of her earliest demands for me to see her as uniquely her own self. But as a mother, I was slow to get the point. Only now, really, do I see how she swims in her own life, how she always has, swimming by me, near me, through me, as her own baby boy does now. Maybe, like faith, this particular revelation can only be learned experientially.

One of Jung’s late-life revelations was his deep faith in a mystery, a divine Spirit, a web of creation. No one had ever shattered his faith, he observed, because it was experiential for him; the presence he had experienced could not be un-experienced. But talking and writing about faith is always fraught. Perhaps the experience of divinity is as individual as a fingerprint or snowflake. In these last few days before my daughter’s due date, I’ve begun a sort of

faith-inventory, trying to recollect the touchstones of my own experience of divinity, as I watch her prepare for her baby's arrival.

What I keep coming back to, is how so many gifts contain loss, and how so many losses contain gifts. I foresee moments of stinginess, when I long to have "my daughter back" to myself; but more, I see the gift of this new being, how he brings his tiny colorful self to the mosaic, filling an empty, dark space with his particular light.

Recently, I saw a video of Pope Francis giving a homily. A little girl with Down Syndrome ran toward him, while her mother and guards grasped at air, the Pope waved them away. He held his hand out to her, and she took it. She settled in a chair behind him, and he held her hand throughout the rest of the service. Let me be as present as that, I pray. To my daughter and her baby. Let me be a loving presence that sees them with the soft eyes of this Pope, a man not of my own faith tradition, but a person led by his own pure heart to see how each of us illuminate the world.