



Lifted Into The World: This Month's Birth Story



P A R E N T H O R O E D G N A N C Y

JESSICA MOUGIS APRIL 30, 2016



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I heard you before I saw you.

Dear Emily,

I heard you before I saw you. It was the most beautiful sound. It told me you were here, and you were healthy. January 26, 2016. 10:26am. 6 pounds 8 ounces. 10 fingers and 10 toes. Happy birthday Emily Rae!

The truth is, it was scary on that operating table in that cold room, under the bright lights with so many doctors around. I felt completely exposed and intensely vulnerable, my arms spread open and my body

numb. I had to be strong for you, little one. I knew I had to take care of me so I could take care of you. As you took your first breath, I focused on my breath, and I heard you cry.

Your daddy held you and brought you to me. I saw your face and our cheeks touched. I kissed you. You stopped crying for a moment. I saw you and you saw me.

The sensations were intense as the surgery went on. I had to close my eyes and breathe. Four counts in, four counts out. Steady and calm so that the panic that felt so close did not overtake me. Your daddy held you by my head. I listened to your sounds. I heard you.

When the surgery was complete, they laid you on my chest. I felt relief. We were okay, and we were together.

I am beyond grateful you are a healthy and happy girl, and I thank God everyday for that. I pray that you are always happy, healthy, safe and thriving, and I feel in my soul immense gratitude that you are here.

People often say, "All that matters is that the baby is healthy." The thing is, it also matters that there's a healthy mama- in body and in mind. Because you and I are symbiotic. If I weren't happy, healthy, safe and thriving, then how could you be?

When I hold you in my arms, I feel the most intense love I've ever felt. I'm amazed that somehow my body housed you and now produces the nutrients you need to grow. When I look at my face, I can see you in it now. When I look at your face, I am in awe. And when you smile? I can't even describe that in words.

I want you to grow up seeing a mom who loves and takes care of herself, and in turn you will love and take care of yourself. I took care of myself in that operating room from the moment you were born, and I promise I will continue to do that. I want you to see a strong mama, so that you know deep within your soul that you are strong too.

There's so much more I want to say. I want to tell you about how amazing your daddy was through it all, and how he took care of us. I want to explain how your birth was simultaneously frightening and divine, magical and difficult, and how I wouldn't change a thing because you're here now. I want to tell you about how I felt the presence of your great grandparents and your great-great grandparents in that operating room; how I believe they were ushering you into this world.

We have a whole lifetime for those stories, little one. For now, I want you to know- I heard you before I saw you. It was the most beautiful sound. And I will listen to you and love you always and forever.

Love,

Mama

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