

The Bows and the Arrows

By Donna Bishop

We were admitted to the hospital during the quiet hours when most of the rooms were in dark shadows. Our arrival was anticipated but the day and time was not recorded. Doctor Anderson, our Obstetrician, assured us our wee one was in no hurry to enter the world. His estimate was two to three more weeks.

My last day of work was Friday June 30th leaving ample time to complete the preparations to bring our new baby home. Saturday we shopped for a small chest to store the darling tiny baby clothes. Our budget was limited so we decided on a two-drawer unpainted pine wood chest. That meant a trip to the hardware store for a quart of white glossy paint, a brush and turpentine. My husband said he would do the painting, however, Monday morning he rushed off to graduate classes. I eyed the chest and paint for several hours then decided I could probably manage the job. I spend the balance of the day happily painting. By the end of the day I was physically tired and ready for bed early but exceedingly proud of the glossy white chest drying in the living room.

I awake around 10:00 p.m. with uncomfortable cramping but did not think it meant labor pains. My concept of labor pains was pretty vague since this was a new experience for me. The cramping continued and intensified over the next several hours. I was reluctant to contact the doctor because it was in the middle of the night of the 4th of July. The long and short of it was I was nearly ready to deliver by the time we reached the hospital. We were two young, dumb, almost twenty-three-year-olds about to assume responsibility for a new life!

The doctor arrived late or our baby arrived early with the result that I delivered by natural birth. I was assured I did a beautiful job and everyone was OK. We had a perfect little girl who would be in my arms momentarily.

I anticipated feeling that this child was part of me, that in some way she belonged to me. Instead this small warm living creation was placed on my chest and I experienced an overwhelming sense that she was only on loan to us to be loved and cared for. She came to us with a wholeness that was her own.

Words in *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran express my awakening. "You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth. The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far."