

I'm Still Learning

by Marilyn Reeves

I am welcomed into this strange and terrifying world with its glaring lights and too loud sounds which I cannot assimilate and so I scream! And then, someone picks me up and holds me and I know, somehow, that I am safe. So the very first lesson I learn about life is that love takes the fear away.

Time goes by and, little by little, I begin to perceive the world around me. People's faces, colors, warm things, cold things, and things that taste good. Like my toes.

More time passes and I am aware of Mama, an entity here to serve me, and of Papa, who sometimes entertains me. I study other children and like to watch them play.

When I am one I begin to understand words and learn to say a few. And I'm ready to explore ... everything! First I touch, then I taste, then I bang, then I throw. And the word I hear most often now is No. Not quite sure what that word really means, but then they take my toys away and make me scream!

When I am two, I want to explore even more and often strike out on my own. I am especially attracted to water now. Lakes and streams and swimming pools. And if Mama doesn't watch closely, that water may well be the end of me, because I still don't understand the word No.

When I get bigger I go to school and learn that I am there to learn. I find that if I struggle to understand something and then finally I do, it's like light replacing darkness and I want to learn ... everything!

I learn about my likes and dislikes. I learn to love reading and writing and music and art. And I learn about the world, and want to see it all.

And over a long time of growing and learning, and learning and growing, I am finally old enough to leave school behind and to move on to whatever the world has in store for me.

There's so much I want to see and do, but I'm told that I'm too young. Give it time. You still have much to learn.

I am told that for a woman to be happy that she must marry. So I get married and unmarried, a couple of times, before I learn that marriage is not meant for me. I raise a son on my own and in the blink of an eye he is grown. Then he gets married and – lo and behold – he has children of his own.

All the while I do the best I can to play the game of life. After all the pain, the joy, the sorrow, the doing and the learning – there's still so much I want to see and do, but now I'm told that I'm too old.

And I wonder how it can be ending when I'm only just beginning? There's still so much to learn.