

COVID Reformulation Postcards

Laura Turner

A letter to my baby during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Dearest smallest boy,

I've written you a letter to capture this most unusual of times as I welcomed you into the world from the dark snug where you had been held and kept safe into a world that had opened and closed to you in just a few short months. The dark of the winter has never left, and we pass our time in the shadows longingly wanting to stretch our legs outside. As you once held your hand to mine in the womb, I now do the same to the window and beyond hesitant and uncertain. The threat is hushed, dear child, present in my furrowed brow and distracted smile, slightly incongruous to the morning song of the birds and our heartbeats, once in tandem, now with mine beating slightly faster in time with the BBC News theme. I hold you close as if back in the womb wishing I could once again keep you as safe as I could then. We breathe each other in and out and I am struck that the familiarity of you close to me and asleep in my arms is as much reassuring to me as it is to you.

I notice you watching me, pressed and strained, as I try to figure out mother, wife, teacher and employee. In returning to work, our home is my workplace and my roles, once distinct and separate, become blurred. The tendrils of the pain and terror in my work seep in under the door and the bandages worn by heroes come off in panicked bursts behind closed doors so desperate they are not to let the mask slip. All this broken by your piercing cries as your first wobbly steps leave you to come toppling. I hear your Dad scoop you up but feel conflicted nonetheless,

I don't know who to respond to first. I'm a jack of all trades now, unable to give too much to one thing, if I am to survive and keep all those plates spinning, including the one that is your dinner (and I am thankful that my job has allowed this to be a constant for you as it clearly can't be for others). My inner perfectionist, striving to do it all, has to be sated with the repeated mantra "good enough, good enough, good enough".

Then I see you, little boy. Really see you with your beautiful wide smile, pouting lip, sleepy eyes and crawling knees. Alive and well. And I am here with you where I might have been out at work thinking about those tiny toes and round cheeks. To you, your world is small and everybody important is here and that, my child, may well be enough.

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