

That Beautiful Moment

The phone rang; it was 4:30 a.m. My sister was on the other end of the line frantically telling me to hurry and get home. I hung up the phone and laid my head back down, falling back to sleep, when the phone rang again; once again, it was my sister calling. This time she was demanding, telling me that she was in the hospital. I hurriedly gathered my things, and within a half hour, I was on my way.

Three and a half hours later, I urgently arrived at the hospital. My hands slid off the sweat-consumed steering wheel as my feet shakily acquainted themselves with the parking lot pavement. Nearing the doors of the hospital, I felt the pulsing of my blood racing through my veins. Scurrying to the elevator, I could feel the turbulence of the air wafting me in the face, like that of a train rushing by. The tension in the air was so thick that I could cut it with a knife. Meeting up with my mom and dad, I could see that they were equally anxious and nervous for their daughter.

I walked into my sister's room; the distinct hospital aroma biting at my lungs. I still hadn't grown used to seeing my sister this precarious way (a large, protruding belly). My concern for her was so apparent, my body language was easily tattling on me. Giving her a hug, I sensed her awareness of what was about to happen. I would compare it to that of a child not wanting to have its loose tooth pulled but knows it's going to happen. After our quick greeting, I uneasily slid out the door as the attending nurse was going to administer an epidural.

The day our family had eagerly awaited was here. My sister was going into labor, and I was to videotape the birth. As twins, we had been planning for this day ever since she found out that she was pregnant. The time had come, and neither one of us were prepared for this "first." Little did I know what I was in for. The hours passed as I paced back and forth in the mundane hallways that held many life-changing events. Fidgeting and nail biting were sharpened down to a science. Supper time quickly came and went, and the contractions had gotten within a few minutes of each other. I wanted passionately for this to be over with.

Fifteen and a half hours into that nerve-racking ordeal, I saw her through the lens of the video camera begin to labor heavily. Like sprinters bursting out of their starting blocks, her blood pressure rose dramatically. Her screams pierced me, and for the first time, I truly felt my sister's mortality. With every strained breath, I could see her face flush red, and the intense agony of the moment grip her very being. Her blood pressure got dangerously close to having a stroke: 200 over 100. Her insulting profanity had become a myriad of words towards the baby's daddy. With every unchanged fistful of bed sheet, her erupting unrest and pure excruciating pain was growing. The room was full of immense troubled concern. The delivering doctor thought that doing a C-section might be the best decision, trying to hide the true consequences of the situation.

However, the time finally arrived. At 9:25 p.m., the head came slipping out, quickly followed by the shoulders and the rest of the body. Graciously gliding into the world, it was a girl!

I saw the relief wash over my sister's face like the calm after a horrendous, twisting tornado. I captured this on tape and set the camera aside. Comforting her, I began to cry happily. Gratitude was flowing out through my tears; I was thankful to have been there for this miracle. I was also flooded with jubilation when I heard the baby cry; that first, ear-splitting wail from the baby was one I won't ever forget. I was tremendously relieved that it was all over with, like runners finally catching their breath after racing to the finish.

In that moment, I held the most immense regard for my mom, knowing that she had gone through this final stage of creation five times. I had always heard that the physical pain of giving birth is quite colossal, but that it is always immediately replaced by the tranquility of hearing that newborn test out its lungs. In particular, I learned that my sister's struggle and perseverance could result in a beautiful ending: a breathing miracle of a higher power.

November 22, 2002