Marie,

I still remember how we used to talk about raising our kids together. Back then it was this little future we could visit whenever we wanted. I'm so glad I got to dream it with you.

Motherhood can make you feel brand new and bring you back to parts of yourself you thought you'd lost. It can be tender in ways you never expected, healing things you didn't know it would touch. And it asks a lot of you, especially in those early weeks when the nights can feel long and lonely. It means so much to have someone who can see you through the fog of it.

A couple of things I wish I'd known then. A hard night can just be a hard night. Let the sun come up before you decide what it means. And when someone offers to help, you can give them the real answer, even if it's as small as "Could you stay while I take a shower?" Small things can give you little pieces of yourself back.

For a while, you might wonder if you'll ever feel like yourself again. You will. And I hope you come to love the person you're becoming even more. There's something so tender about catching a glimpse of yourself through the eyes of someone who lights up just because you walked into the room. I hope, every now and then, you get to see yourself the way they see you.

I hope there are good hands around you in those early weeks. Someone to warm up your dinner again, someone to sit beside you when you're too tired to talk. I hope you get a few quiet minutes when your body feels like yours, and a little more sleep than you thought you'd get. And when someone asks how you are, I hope you feel safe enough to tell them the whole truth, whatever it is that day.

Those early days ask you to move slowly. You might wish they'd hurry along sometimes. Let them take their time when you can. Time may never feel quite this slow again. The change is so quiet that one day you'll look up and realize it's moving faster than it ever has. You might find yourself wishing for one of those afternoons when an hour felt like it could last forever.

And I hope you get to enjoy the magic of it, too. I've never found that particular kind of magic anywhere else in the world. I remember looking back at a photo from only two weeks earlier and thinking, Oh, you were so little. I hope you get moments when you can stay right where you are for another minute and take it all in.

I love you, Marie. I'm thinking of you in these last days of waiting, and I hope the days on the other side are gentle with you.

Love,
Angela