

# Pulling Away

Category: Parenting

written by Julie A. Dickson | June 13, 2022

Left alone, feeling a tenuous thread stretching taut skin over adipose tissue and tender flesh—pink, vulnerable womb empty; umbilicus severed; blood dried and brown. Perspiration beads on my brow, my breasts are heavy with milk. The letdown eases the waning contractions, starts to erase my recent memory of pain. Her first steps begin the leaving time. She walks away, toward eventual freedom; the branches pull away from the mother oak. I sigh a whisper—rustling leaves, an almost silent cry.

My empty nest yearns for eggs or hatchlings but is filled no more. Acorns roll across the pavement into crevices, to become seedlings emerging in the spring. My daughter grows.

Held close to my beating heart, my grandson's cherub mouth searches. I hand the newborn back to his mama, who cuddles him to suckle. My breasts no longer ache with milk; it's muscle memory, holding time, as I recall holding her. I feel the pulling once again, but without pain.

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