

Heart to Page A Daughter's Tribute

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BlueRose ONE^{.com}
S t o r i e s M a t t e r
New Delhi • London

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS

India | U.K.

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S t o r i e s M a t t e r
New Delhi • London

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ISBN: 978-93-7542-056-9

First Edition: April 2026

To my mum in heaven,

*Thank you for everything that
you have done for me.*



FOREWORD

It took me a year to compile my thoughts and put them into words. This collection of poems is dedicated to my mum, whom I adore and look up to. An admirable and a lovely soul, she touched so many lives. Each poem is a piece of her story—her joy, her strength, her battles, and the legacy she continues to live through me.

Through these words, I give thanks to God for the gift of her life and for the lessons she left behind. This is not just a remembrance, but a celebration of a life lived with purpose, love, and unwavering faith.

PREFACE

Dear Me,

You are standing in a world that no longer looks the same. The woman who taught you how to live is no longer here to watch you do it. And yet, here you are—breathing, writing and remembering.

You often wonder if you are being strong enough. Let me remind you: strength does not always look like standing tall. Sometimes it looks like sitting quietly with your memories, letting the tears come and still choosing to go on. Sometimes it looks like writing poems because speaking her name out loud feels too hard.

You are not moving away from her by living your life—you are carrying her forward. In your habits, your kindness, your fears, your laughter and even in the silences you have learned to keep. She is not only in the past; she lives in the way you love, in the way you notice small things, in the way your heart still reaches for her.

This book is not just for her.

It is for you—the daughter who loved deeply, lost painfully and chose words over silence.

You are still her daughter.

And you are doing better than you think.

With love,

Kookie Padmanabhan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by thanking God for giving me the strength for being with me with every season of my journey. Without His grace, comfort and guidance, this collection would not have been possible. I thank my mother, whose love, faith and belief in me continue to shape who I am today.

I am thankful to my cousin Ketan, and Uncle Ramesh who stood by me during the difficult phase of my life. I am thankful to my best friend, also the editor of the poems, who has worked to craft this beautiful masterpiece into perfection. I would also like to acknowledge all those whose lives were touched by my mother—her students, colleagues, friends and extended family. Your shared memories, love and respect for her helped keep her spirit alive in my heart.

PROLOGUE

Some lives are not remembered for how long they were lived, but for how deeply they were felt.

This collection begins with a dedicated human being whose life was rooted in love, shaped by faith and shared generously with others. She was many things to many people—a devoted mother, a guiding teacher, a loyal friend—but above all, she was a soul who lived with purpose and quiet strength.

These poems trace the moments that defined her journey: laughter shared within family, lessons taught with patience, friendships formed in trust and battles faced with courage. They speak of a heart that loved without measure and a faith that never wavered, even in the hardest seasons.

Though her physical presence is now absent, her influence remains—woven into memories, values and the strength to rise each new day. This is a story of love that did not end, of faith that carried her through and of a legacy that continues to live on.

*This collection stands as a small offering of gratitude for a life
that gave so much to others.*

*Written under the pseudonym
Kookie Padmanabhan*

HEART TO PAGE ONE

A soul that was ----- happy, happier, happiest.

"The joy of the Lord is your strength." - Nehemiah 8:10

You were a joyful soul.

A soul with a smiling face,
A soul who smiled through her pain.

A soul who held on to God
For everything, big and small.

A soul who loved life
And chose not to complain.

A soul who saw the best in everyone,
A soul who loved life through it all.

HEART TO PAGE TWO

A Heart That Loved Beyond Measure

*“Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes,
always perseveres.”- 1 Corinthians 13:7*

A heart that loved and had no grudges,
A love that was pure and had no hatred.
A heart that loved as deep as the ocean—
That was a heart that would beat for me.

Mom, you always said, “I was born from your heart.”
This explains it all—when you first saw me
And I held your finger tight.

A heart that poured out the love
That she had for me.
A heart that loved beyond measure.

HEART TO PAGE

THREE

The Gift of Life

“Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.”-Psalm 127:3

The day you were born was a gift of life for everyone.

The day I was born, it was a gift of life—

From you to me and from me to you.

The life that we shared had no words.

It was simple, filled with every mother–daughter moment:

Fights, laughter, fun and happiness.

But you made our life centred around God.

Love was the radius,

And we were the gift of life for each other.

HEART TO PAGE

FOUR

Best in All

“Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning.”-Proverbs 9:9

A teacher who was a guru, mother and mentor,
A teacher who was loved by all,
A teacher who was strict, yet caring, loving, kind and
generous.

A teacher who loved her students,
Who moulded a million minds
A teacher who brought characters alive,
A teacher who was a problem solver.

A teacher who loved to write and loved to hold the mic.
A teacher so dedicated to her work
That she trained students to set up a tent in three minutes.

A teacher not just for her students,
But also for me.
A teacher who brought out
The good, the better and the best in all!

HEART TO PAGE

FIVE

Gifts Called Family and Friends

“Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay.”-

Ruth 1:16

Family was everything to you.
Through the good, the happy and the sad,
They meant a lot to you.

You stood by them no matter what.
You always wanted us to stay together, united.

You were a doting daughter,
An understanding sister,
A loving aunt,
And a supportive mother.

Your friends were your treasures—
Family too,
Not just supportive to you,
But to me as well.

Your friends were gifts you could lean on.
No matter what the hardships were,
They were there for you,
Even when you lost your near and dear ones.

Your friends were there when you were ill.
Your friends were a gift of life to you!

HEART TO PAGE

SIX

The News

*“The Lord is close to the broken hearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”-Psalm 34:18*

When the doctor told me
That the chances of you having cancer were high,
I wore a blank expression,
Wondering if I had heard the news right.

I remember the day you went for the CT scan—
My heart pounding, racing,
Waiting, longing to see you
And hold you tight.

Something inside me kept telling me
That things weren't right.

As I entered the house,
I went straight to the prayer place,
Because that was where you laid your problems
At the feet of God.

As the tears fell,
I knelt on my knees, asking God for a miracle,
Because I wanted you to stay with me.
I asked God for a miracle that day.

When I finally received the news of your cancer,
A piece of my faith was lost,
And a crack appeared in my heart.

HEART TO PAGE

SEVEN

The Hospital Corridors

*“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no
evil, for you are with me.”-Psalm 23:4*

The first time I ever stepped into a hospital
Was when my uncle was admitted.

I saw patients waiting outside ICUs and CCUs,
Desperate for updates about their loved ones. I heard wailing,
screaming and crying—

And from that day on,
I hated hospital visits.
Then 2023 happened,
And I found myself revisiting the hospital.

I thought Mum would be discharged that very day.
But when the doctors said they needed to run some tests,

I grew worried.
Yet, seeing you so brave
Gave me a sense of hope.
But when they told me *the news* of your illness,
I was shattered.
Flashbacks of 2018 played in my head—

Only this time,
It was Mum lying in the hospital bed.

That was when I became connected
To the hospital corridors on a personal level.
Every time you were wheeled out
For X-rays and scans,

I whispered silent prayers outside those hospital corridors,
Begging that everything would be fine.
As days passed, your health began to fluctuate—
Doctors coming and going,

Checking in on how you were doing.
Those hospital corridors spoke volumes;

They heard my voice, they held my fear.
They stood with me in grief, as I signed those declaration
forms.

And when the 28th of August dawned,
Doctors rushed in with the crash cart—

The hospital corridors grew silent,
As if they knew something was wrong.
And when the monitor showed a straight line,
When the details of death had to be filled in,

It was not just me who cried aloud that day—
The hospital corridors cried too.

HEART TO PAGE

EIGHT

The 27th and 28th of August, 2023

*“How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?” - Psalm 13:1-2*

I remember the 27th of August—Sunday—
That day still fresh in my mind, As though it happened just
yesterday.
The memories grow so strong. That sometimes I wish I could
forget them all.

Things were fine—
Doctors visited, pleased with your improvement.
Discussions went on about the chemo
That was supposed to happen the next day.

Time passed slowly that day.
You had dreams—Dreams of your loved ones in heaven.
You dreamt of Dad,
Telling him you would meet him soon.

And then—Things changed so fast that evening
I wasn't ready to face it.

I remember you calling out my name
For the very last time.

Before they placed the oxygen mask on you.

Still, I prayed and asked God for a miracle,
Because you believed in God more than I did.

I was restless. I tried to be strong.

But I couldn't hold back my tears for long.

I had your close friends and students for support.

I stormed heaven—pleading and crying.

All I wanted was you.

All I wanted was a miracle.

Every second, every minute was precious.

Your pulse dropped.

Your breathing slowed.

I did not want to accept

That you were going.

And as you drew your last breath on the 28th August 2023,

That was when I lost faith—

Faith in the God you believed in.

And my heart shattered

Into a million pieces.

HEART TO PAGE

NINE

Fought the Fight

*“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith.” - 2 Timothy 4:7*

You fought the fight at your best—
That wretched, horrible sickness that consumed you.

It spread inside you like wildfire,
Yet, through all it did, you fought your best.

You did not give up; you fought the fight
Like a soldier in battle, Fighting a war deep inside you.

But little by little,
That brave soldier began to give up—

Not because you wanted to,
But because you were tired of the battles thrown at you.

All that was left behind were broken promises
And the empty space you left behind for me.

HEART TO PAGE TEN

Echoes of Silence

*“The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who
are crushed in spirit.”- Psalm 34:18*

The aftermath of your passing
Hit me hard—harder than anything else that could break me.

Things changed from that day.
Rooms that once echoed with your voice and laughter went
silent;

From that day, the rooms screamed silence.
The empty rooms now search for your voice that has faded
away.

The empty rooms have left a void,
A void too deep—

From seeing you sitting in your favourite chair, reading,
To your photograph taking its place at the table.

The rooms are now empty and silent,
Just like a cemetery.
I found it difficult to enter the empty home—
The empty rooms, the empty hall.
The empty hall heard my cries.

My shouts and the sound of things being broken.
But it could not comfort my grief;

Maybe somewhere,
It too missed your presence.

HEART TO PAGE

ELEVEN

Rising Forward in Faith

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run, they will walk and not be faint.” -Isaiah 40:31

For my mum in heaven,
Who always believed in me.

There were times I had given up but I fought the urge,
For after all, I have your blood running inside me.

Like the phoenix that rises from the ashes,
And like the eagle that renews its strength,

I keep moving forward each new day.
For each new day is a day of new life—

A life spent thanking God
For making my days and my life

Stronger and more beautiful,
With all its ups and downs.

HEART TO PAGE

TWELVE

Those Unspoken Words

“Before a word is on my tongue,
you, Lord, know it completely.”- *Psalms 139:4*

There are unspoken words inside me

That I wish I could have told you.

I had so much to say, but never did,

And now I regret not saying them.

There were times when we had our fights,

And I did not say sorry,

Because somewhere you knew

I was guilty for what I did—

But I still wish I had said it.

I remember the talks you gave me,

Asking me to reflect on the things you said.

I listened to every word,

Yet said nothing in return.

I wish I could have told you

How much I loved you,

And how much I wished you were here—

But it is too late.

*Even though I did not say sorry or I love you,
I whispered a silent prayer,
Thanking God for giving you to me.*

*I wish I had told you I love you more often,
But my actions spoke
Of the love I held for you.*

*Even though I did not say sorry or I love you,
I whispered a silent prayer,
Thanking God for giving you to me.*

*I wish I had told you I love you more often,
But my actions spoke
Of the love I held for you.*

*I wish I had told you
How grateful I am to have had you in my life.
Those unspoken words
Now rise as a prayer each day,
Yet I carry them quietly
Deep within me.*

HEART TO PAGE

THIRTEEN

Faith, Inked in Memory

*“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you...
When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned. **Isaiah-**
43:2*

When I am alone and the nights are quiet,
I need strength to move forward,
For I had lost my faith in God.

I look at my tattoos—
One of a mother holding her child.
It gives me strength,
Knowing you will always protect me
And love me from above.

When I look at the tattoo of the Phoenix,
It reminds me to rise,
Just as it rises from the ashes.

Memories flash across my inward eye,
Making me feel
A little happy,
A little pensive,
A little teary.

Phone calls, messages, and laughter have faded,
But your memories remain fresh.

The fear of forgetting your smile,
Your voice,

Cripples me.
But you do not let that happen—
Because you come to me in my dreams.
So many *firsts* have happened without you.
I never knew I would have to become an adult overnight,
Making decisions all by myself,
Unsure if I was doing the right thing.
And when I look at your photograph,
I know you would turn me toward God.
That is when I began to find my faith again—
Trusting God to help me make my decisions.

HEART TO PAGE FOURTEEN

IMPRINTED

*“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens,
and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever
and ever”-Daniel 12:3*

*There is a popular quote by William Arthur
Ward about teachers and inspiration.*

My mum inspired lives right from the start of her teaching career.

There was one particular batch that adored her.

They were in awe of her teaching,

Mesmerised by her English,

And carried away by imagination in her History classes.

Their bond was special and rare.

They followed her instructions to the T.

As young as she was, my mum trained them for guide camps

And took them to national competitions in Pachmarhi.

My mum was happiest when her students did well.

Over the years, the Batch of '76 grew to hold

A special place in her heart.

And as time passed, that bond only grew stronger.

*They made get-togethers and birthdays special
With their surprise visits and calls.*

*The Batch of '76 was there
When my mum was in the hospital—
From the very beginning
Until her last breath.*

*They stood by me when I was low.
They became my strength
When I had none.*

*My mum imprinted many lives,
But she left a special imprint
On the Batch of '76.*

*A heartfelt thank you
To the Batch of '76
For always being there.*

HEART TO PAGE

FIFTEEN

One Last Time....

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.”- *Revelation 21:4*

*I wish I had a time turner,
Only to relive moments with you **one last time....***

*I want to have those close conversations with you **one last time....***

*I want to receive those light-hearted texts from you **one last time....***

*I want you to cook my favourite meal **one last time....***

*I want to have the tea that you make **one last time....***

*I want you to sing for me **one last time....***

*I want to celebrate festivals and birthdays with you **one last time.***

*I want to fight with you **one last time....***

*I want to laugh with you **one last time....***

*I want you to call out to ‘**Mischief**’ and ‘**Ash**’ **one last time....***

*I want to travel with you **one last time....***

*I want you to teach me English and History **one last time....***

*I want you to write one poem with me **one last time...***

*I want you to make decisions for me **one last time.***

*I want to see you draped in a saree **one last time....***

*I want you to ring the doorbell **one last time....***

*I want you to wipe my tears **one last time....***

*I want you to hug me **one last time....***

*I want you to hold my finger **one last time....***

I want to hear you call my name,

“KOOKIE,”

one last time....

HEART TO PAGE

Life Goes On.....

Dear Me,

It's going to be almost three years
Since Mum left you behind,
And since then, things have changed.
You now see life from a different perspective—
From being sheltered under the wings of a mother eagle
To being independent and trusting God
With every step you take.
You have come a long way.

You were in a mess—
A different kind of mess, I should say,
Somewhere not accepting the fact
That Mum was gone.
It hit hard, really hard, as the days passed by.

Always remember to turn the pages of the book,
Because some chapters need to be healed.
The ***“what ifs”*** and the ***“whys”***
Have never given you answers,
So why ponder over questions
That will still leave you empty?
You've come a long way since then.

Every time you were down,
When you were hurt or when you were sick,
Mum knew you.
Don't think she's forgotten you
Just because she's not with you anymore.
The only difference is—

She was once physically present to wipe your tears,
And now she is spiritually present,
Guiding you, watching over you,
And giving you the strength to heal.

I know there are times when you are afraid,
But remember—
Mum taught you to live without fear.

Always remember those precious moments you shared with
Mum—

From her teaching you to walk,
To speaking, to writing;
From the nights when you both sang together
To the day you wrote your very first poem.

There are so many things you learned from Mum
And loved her for—

Her captivating speeches,
Her love for teaching,
Her way of dressing,
Her style of writing,
Her friendly nature,
And her understanding heart.

Mum was a strong woman.
She stood tall and firm
Because she was God-fearing.
You've learned to be strong like her.

Always remember—
No one has the right to hurt you.
Do not let your guard down.

No matter where you are in the coming years,
Or where life takes you,
Even when you build an identity of your own,
I want you to always be known as—

“KUSUM PADMANABHAN’S (ONLY) DAUGHTER.”

Note from the Author

This book means a lot to me it took me a year to put my thoughts in words. It was written in silent rooms, quiet nights and when memories felt louder than reality.

What started as pain slowly became prayer. What began as silence slowly became words.

These poems are not just verses on paper — they are pieces of my heart. They carry the voice of a daughter who loved deeply, grieved honestly, questioned faith, lost it for a while, and found it again in the quietest ways.

My mother was not only my parent; she was my teacher, my guide, my strength, and my safe place. Through this collection, I hope her love continues to echo — not only in my life, but in the lives of those who read these pages.

If you have ever waited outside a hospital room, if you have ever wished for “one last time,” if you have ever carried unspoken words in your heart, I hope you find comfort here.

This book is for every grieving soul learning to live with loss, For every heart rebuilding faith and for every soul discovering that love never truly leaves — It simply changes form.

With gratitude and hope,
Kookie Padmanabhan.