

# Ode to My Big Sister On the Occasion of Her Eightieth Birthday

Oh, Sister Mine,  
 Who, lo all these many years  
 Attempted to tame the little sister  
 Thou didst not request or even want,  
 Whose "cuteness" was a mystery,  
 Because she did not have  
 Lovely light brown curls like thine,  
 But had no hair at all for a time  
 And then yellow matted stuff that  
 Defied a comb or brush.

The troublesome sister who  
 Poked the eyes out of thy new baby doll  
 And pitched her out of the dolly bed  
 To take her place under the dolly coverlet.

That sister who shared thy room by  
 Leaving her dirty clothing items strewn about  
 Who borrowed thy sweaters and left them  
 Dirty on the floor.

Who complained loudly when thee attempted  
 To make order out of her chaos,  
 Claiming that thou wert ruining her good stuff.

This same sister, who was Mary to your Martha  
 Who took off for parts unknown  
 Whilst you did stay to help maintain familial peace  
 And, yet, whose planes thee most faithfully met  
 Even whilst your daughters found this  
 Carefree Aunt the glamorous one  
 And she did nothing to dissuade them

For baby showers, you bought the diaper pails  
 She bought the Teddy Bears.  
 You cleaned up after her parties  
 Whilst she didst sit in the yard and chat.

You didst help her raise her children  
 And did board them for extended periods of time  
 While she didst gallivant off to theaters and conferences  
 And cocktail parties  
 Thou didst even collect them at a highway stop  
 To take them to visit thy children's grandmother  
 When thy sister was "too busy" with her "professional" life.  
 You didst give thy sister's children the security and love  
 That made them know they would never be alone.

You rejoiced with your sister when she was happy,  
 Listened when she was mad,  
 And shared her grief when life was hard.

She can't imagine how she could have managed without  
 you.

So it is only fitting, after all these years,  
 That Thou shouldst be the cute one  
 And she shouldst cringe when strangers ask  
 "And which is the older?"

(composed on 25 October 2012 by Helen I. Olson,  
 whilst swimming laps at the YMCA)