Copper-haired child, sturdy and cheerful, independent spirit, ready for adventure, she found herself in a faraway land, only three years old in any country. She lived in a mud house, chased the village goats and reeled in the chickens by their tail feathers, stuffing them under one arm and walking proudly to show them off.

Copper-haired eight year old, back home, still sturdy, trying to be cheerful through the mean red measles, crouched over the toilet, vomiting blood. Bending down to support her, I saw the redness and felt my own blood drain away, leaving me ghost colored and weak. She saw my fear and offered comfort. "Don't worry, Mommy, I feel better now."

Thirty years gone by and we have traded places--it is I who have frightened her. "Cancer," the only word she could remember from my phone call. "I'll be there." she said. from 2,000 miles away.

Cool hands on my forehead, warm hands massaging my back. Those same capable hands changing my dressing and cooking my meals. Conversations in the dark, confidences exchanged, fears diluted with love. Tears at the airport, a too familiar scene. "Don't worry, Paidy. I feel better now."