



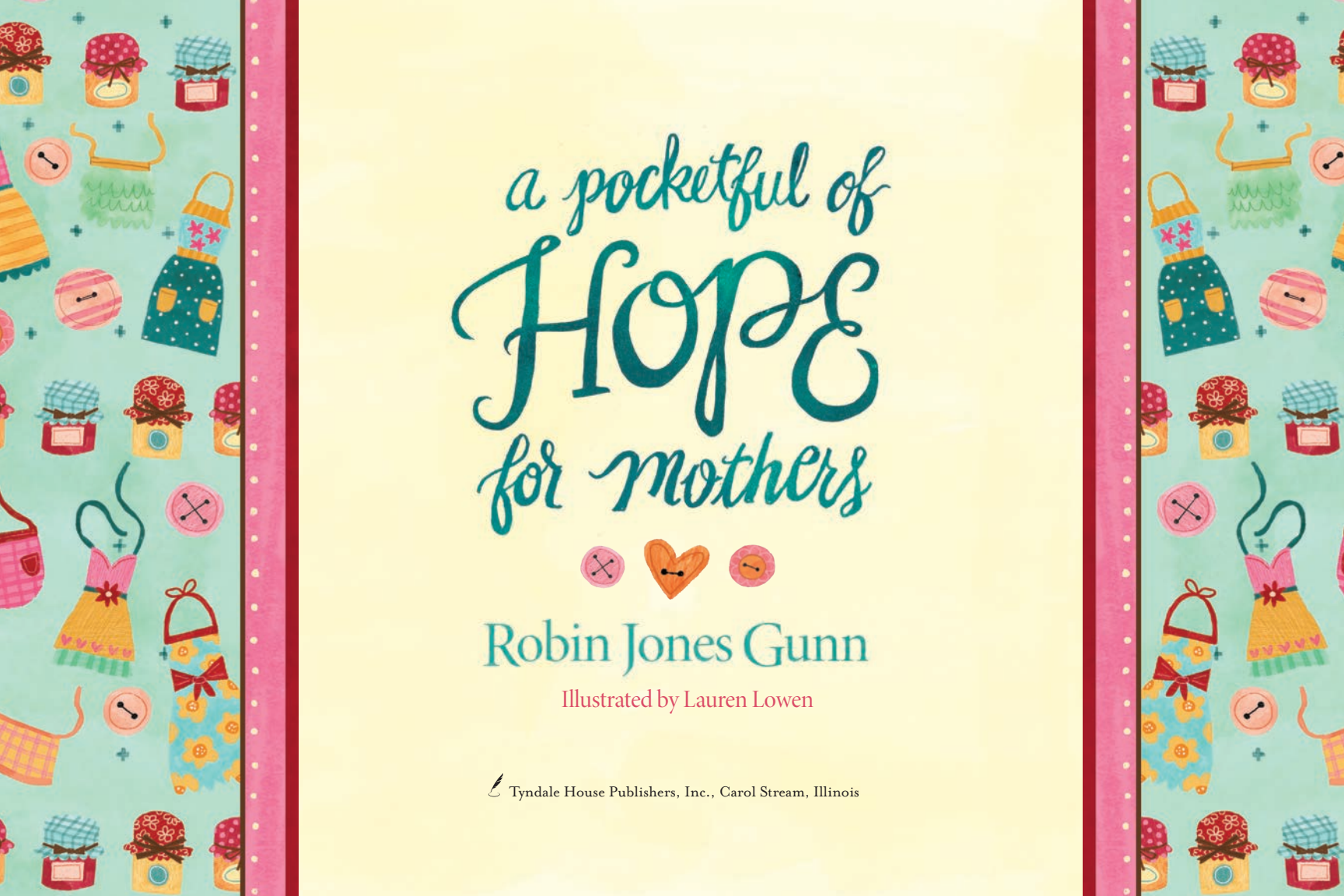
Robin Jones Gunn

Illustrated by Lauren Lowen

*Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her.*

*“Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all.”*

 PROVERBS 31:28-29




a pocketful of
HOPE
for mothers



Robin Jones Gunn

Illustrated by Lauren Lowen

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A Pocketful of Hope for Mothers

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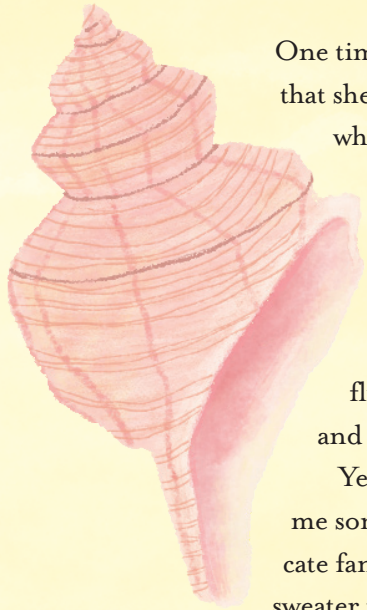
INTRODUCTION

Where the Blue Feathers Hide

*M*y grandmother always kept a treasure or two in the pocket of her apron.

She made her aprons from colorful remnants of summer dresses and stitched them on her olive-green Singer sewing machine. Every apron had a front pocket that went all the way across like a kangaroo pouch.

My memories of her apron pockets seem to revolve around a roll of butterscotch Life Savers I'd almost always find when I slid my eager hand into her pocket. I'd hold up my discovery, and she'd peel back the waxy lining and offer me one of the sweets with a smile. Always with a smile.



One time I found a small pink seashell in her pocket. She told me a tiny creature had once lived inside that shell deep in the ocean. The animal moved out, and its little house tumbled all the way to shore, where she discovered it on a winter morning walk. She bent over and whispered that the shell was mine. I could keep the small wonder.

I clutched that bit of mermaid's loot all afternoon. It spoke to me of worlds beyond my own and marvels yet to experience.

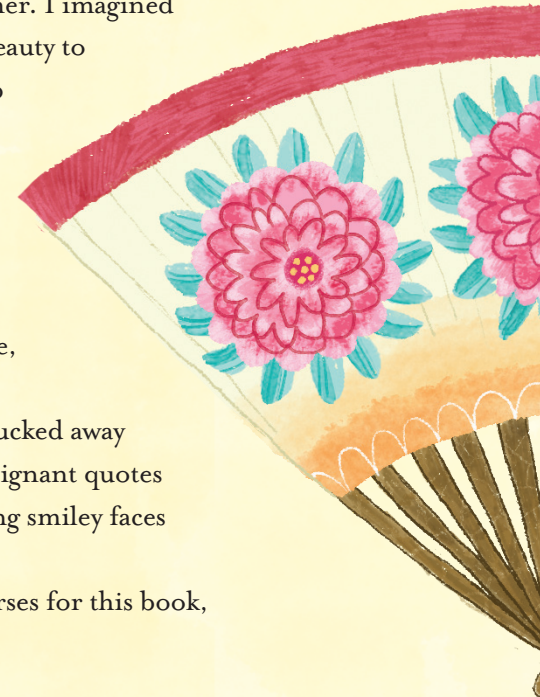
Another treasure I pulled from her pocket was a blue feather. I imagined some wondrous bird dropping the nearly weightless piece of beauty to flutter down, a gift from the sky, for my grandmother to scoop up and tuck into her pocket for me.

Years after my grandma went to heaven, my cousin Cindy sent me some of our grandma's belongings. In the box I found a delicate fan from Korea, a card with a handwritten verse on it, a glittery sweater pin, and one of her aprons. I put the apron on and slipped my hands into the pocket. The only treasure I found was memories. Invisible,

but still inspiring.

The apron is, at this very moment, in my kitchen towel drawer. The other gifts are tucked away with one of my grandma's journals. A hobby of hers was collecting witty remarks and poignant quotes along with her favorite Bible verses. She had lovely handwriting and was skilled at making smiley faces every couple of pages.

As I was sorting through my own collection of various stories, prose, and favorite verses for this book,



memories of my grandma and her aprons rested warmly in my thoughts. I smiled as I remembered the small treasures she collected and hid in her pocket, waiting for me to find them.

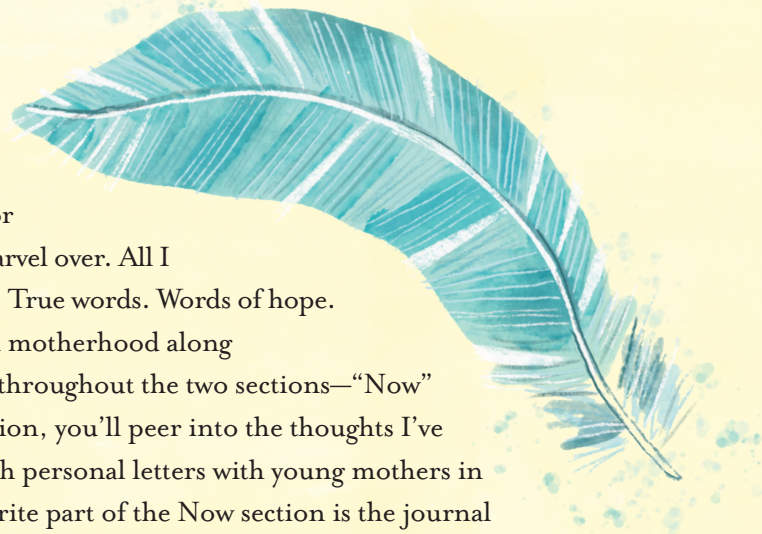
I don't have a roll of Life Savers hidden between these pages for you. You won't find a pink shell or a blue feather to clutch and marvel over. All I

have to give you, dear little mama, is words. Sweet words. True words. Words of hope.

You'll find my favorite Bible verses on motherhood along with thoughtful quotes sprinkled throughout the two sections—"Now" and "Then." In the Now section, you'll peer into the thoughts I've shared in talks and through personal letters with young mothers in this generation. My favorite part of the Now section is the journal entries I penned as I watched our grown children welcome their own babies into the world. The Then section contains excerpts from the journals I kept when our two children were young.

Go ahead. Slip your hand into this pocketful of hope, and know that the tiny treasures on these pages were put there for you. You will find sweet, full circles of shared experiences as mothers and perhaps a few simple wonders that your heart will clutch closely, prompting you to dream of realms beyond what you have yet seen.

My Mama Robin prayer for you as you read this little book is that your mothering heart will be bolstered with courage and clarity.
And most of all hope.

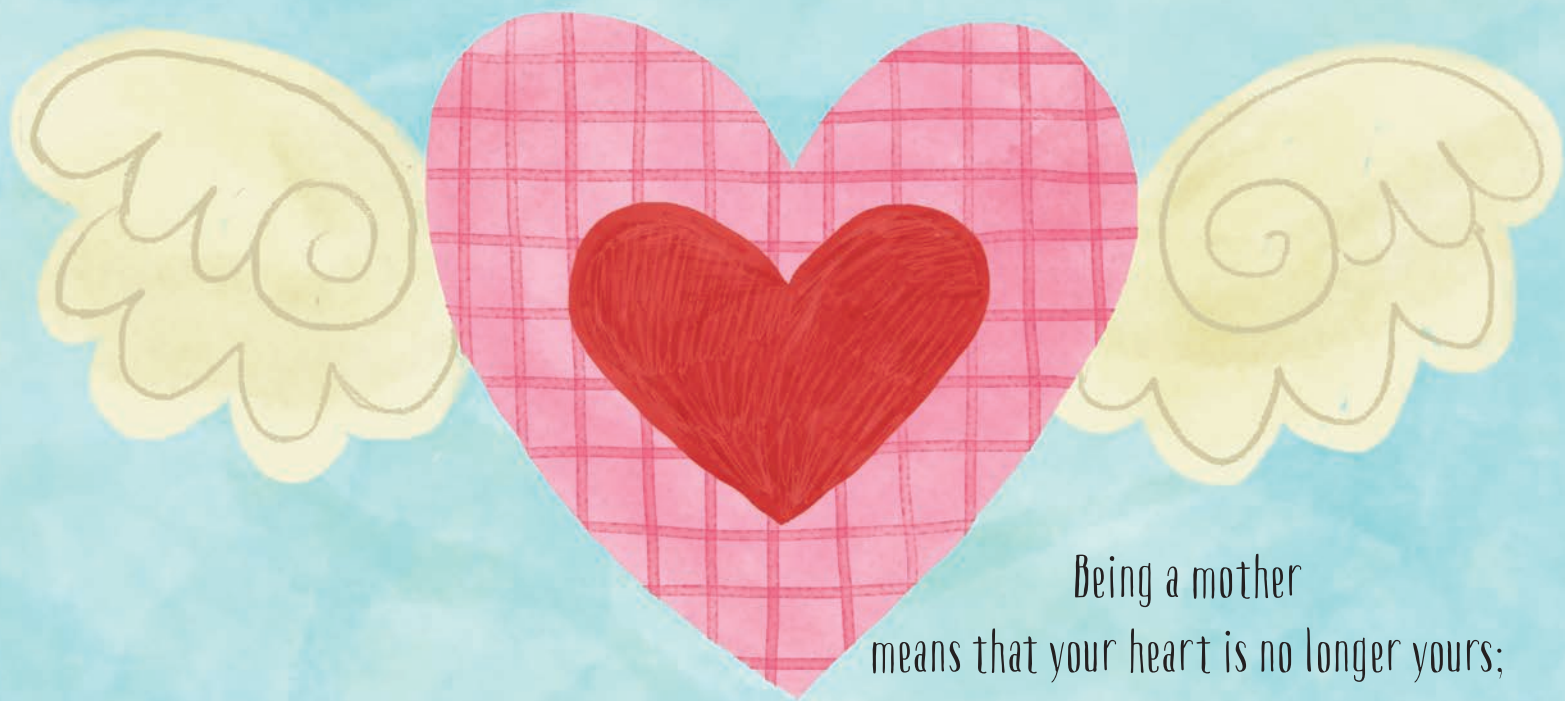


The illustration features two teal-colored birds, one larger than the other, both decorated with intricate white floral and leaf patterns. They are positioned in the center, facing each other. The background is a light cream color, scattered with various musical notes in red, yellow, pink, and teal. Interspersed among the notes are several stylized flowers and leafy branches, also in teal and white, creating a vibrant and musical atmosphere.

“HOPE” IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS—
THAT PERCHES IN THE SOUL—
AND SINGS THE TUNE WITHOUT THE WORDS—
AND NEVER STOPS—AT ALL.

—Emily Dickinson

“‘Hope’ is the thing with feathers”



Being a mother
means that your heart is no longer yours;
it wanders wherever your children do.

—ATTRIBUTED TO GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

PART ONE

NOW:

Embracing the Newness of MomLife

MY HEART FLOATED ON A RIVER OF LOVE FOR YOU
UNTIL THE DAY YOU ARRIVED.
YOUR TINY FINGERS CURLED AROUND MINE,
AND MY WHOLE BEING WAS SWEEPED INTO A SEA OF WONDER.

-RJG



This Just Got Real

Look at you. You're a mother!

As prepared as you were for the grand arrival of your little one, nothing has been exactly as you thought it would be. And yet the moment you first kissed those pudgy cheeks, you felt it. A tremor and a thrill settled on you. This just got real.

You have been entrusted with a brand-new, tiny soul.

What do you do now?

May I share some simple thoughts that will help you navigate this new season?

Trust. Trust the instincts that God affixed to your DNA when He knit you together in your mother's womb.

Delight. Take delight in all the coos and wiggles. Marvel at the miracle for a long moment without allowing a single worry to cross your mind.

Dream. Dream of all the days ahead as you set sail with your wee one to an uncharted future on a sea of possibilities.

Hope. Above all, hold on to hope as you see yourself drifting further away from your former life and as the waves of emotions roll.

Hope will pour over you a fresh dose of courage every morning.

You are this child's mother. You are able. This is a blessing.

Hope will calm your spirit in the middle of the night.

You have done all you can. Your little one is asleep. Now you rest as well.

Hope will compel you to give all you have and then give a little more.

You can do this. You have resources inside that you haven't even tapped yet.

Take heart. Hold on to hope. The winds will blow. The storms will rage. But most days the sun will shine, and you will come to understand true love as you put your hope in God.

