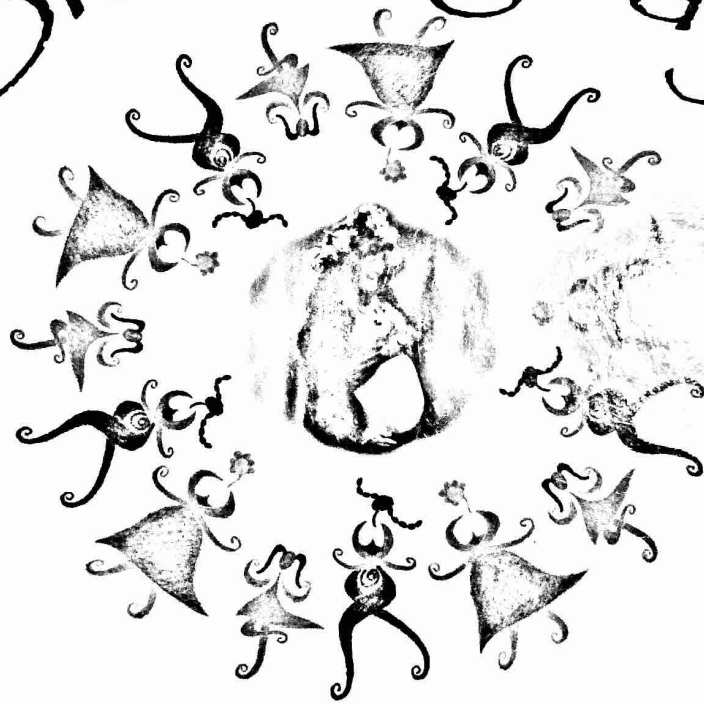


# Blessingways



A Guide to Mother-Centered Baby Showers

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Celebrating Pregnancy Birth and Motherhood

SHARI MASER, CCE

# Chants, Songs, and Sources of Music

These suggested chants, songs and sources of music for Blessingways come from a wide variety of religious and cultural traditions. I encourage you to adapt them to suit your needs; or, compose your own lyrics and/or music. Consider putting your words to the simple, pleasing tunes of folk songs or children's nursery rhymes.

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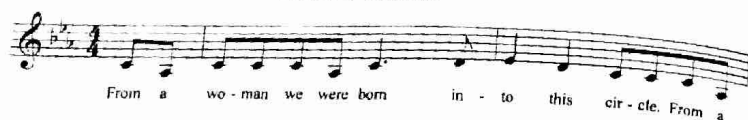
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### Chants for Blessingways

Unless otherwise noted, these are folk songs passed down orally through the generations.

#### From a Woman



#### Our Sister



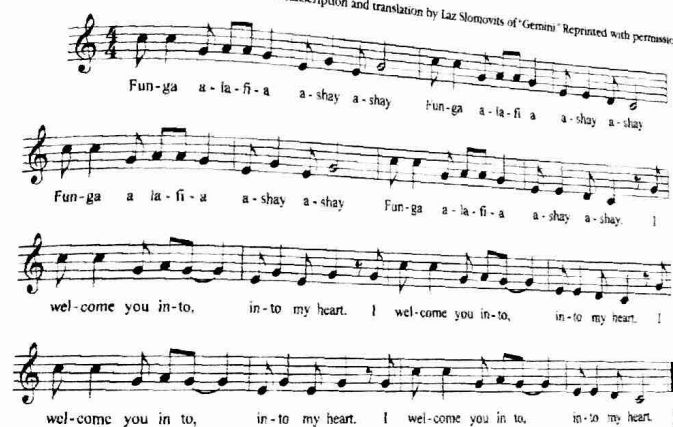
A Blessingway, Cynthia Burke suggests chanting this to a heartbeat rhythm, as accompanied by drumming.

### You Are Beautiful



### Funga

Traditional Nigerian Music transcription and translation by Laz Slomovits of "Genami" Reprinted with permission.



**I Take Delight In**

Reprinted with permission from *Songs For Earthlings* ©1998 Julie Forest Middleton.  
Published by Emerald Earth Publishing, Sebastopol, California. [www.EmeraldEarth.net](http://www.EmeraldEarth.net)

I take de - light in the peace of the riv - er that flows so  
gent - ly to the strength of the sea, and I take de - light in the love that is  
flow - ing, just like a riv - er be - tween you and me.

**Dear Sister**

Dear sis - ter, dear sis - ter, let me tell you how I'm - feel - ing.  
You have giv - en us your treas - ure, we love you so.

Repeat, and/or sing in rounds. Or, try this variation introduced to me by midwife Nancy Wainer:

Dear baby, dear little baby, it is time for you to be born.  
Your momma wants to nurse you, your daddy wants to hold you...

**Help Her On Her Way**

Help her on her way, help her on her way, her birth - ing, her  
birth - ing, her birth - ing way.

Sing additional verses with words such as *bealing, breathing, pushing, family, or loving* in place of *birth*.

**Power, Power, We Are Calling**

Music from *Circle of Song: Songs, Chants and Dances for Ritual and Celebration* ([www.circleofsong.com](http://www.circleofsong.com)) Reprinted by permission.

Pow - er, pow - er, we are call - ing. Pow - er, pow - er,  
we are call - ing. Come, come, be with us to - night!

Other words, such as *courage*, can be substituted for *power*.

## Angel of Love



In "Sisters on a Journey," Sharon Glass suggests singing several verses, each with another word in place of love. She distributes Angel Cards which suggest words such as *faith* or *humor*.

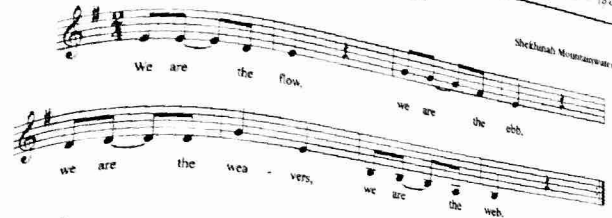
## I Will Not Be Afraid

Music from *Circle of Song: Songs, Chants and Dances for Ritual and Celebration* (www.circleofsong.com). Reprinted by permission.



## from We Are the Flow

SCRAP'S AND THREADS 104



Verse 2

We are the weavers, we are the web, we are the spiders, we are the thread.

In *Circle of Song*, Kate Marks suggests linking hands and doing a weaving dance, perhaps using red yarn.

In *Women's Rituals*, Barbara Walker makes the following suggestion for symbolically weaving the web of sisterhood while chanting about it. Each person sitting or standing in the circle begins with a two-ounce ball of worsted wool knitting yarn that she then tosses to someone else in the circle. The receiver of each ball of yarn wraps the yarn once around her back, then tosses it to someone else. The web that forms in the center of the circle as the various strands of yarn crisscross will be so strong that it can hold the weight of the pregnant mother. She can lie across the middle as everyone else grasps the outer edges of the web and raises it up overhead, lifting her high off the ground. As Walker says, it's "always surprising to find how light even a heavy person can feel, when many are helping to lift. (If ten lift a 150-pound person, each is really lifting only 15 pounds!)" It's also surprising to lie in the middle of such a web and find its apparent fragility transformed into dependable strength."

### I Am Opening

I am o-pen-ing up in sweet sur-ren - der to the lu-min-ous love light  
of the Lord. I am o-pen-ing up in sweet sur-ren - der to the lu-min-ous love light  
of the Lord. I am o - pen - ing, I am o - pen - ing. I am  
o - pen - ing, I am o - pen - ing.

Verse 2:  
I am opening up in sweet surrender  
to the luminous birthright of this babe.

### Let Me Open Like a Flower

Lyrics by Paula Murphy. Music by Kristi Bishop.

Let me o-pen like a flower, flower, of love. life.

Music by Nan Koehler

Oh Cre-a-tor, I am strong as a bear. Oh Cre-a-tor, I am strong as a bear.  
Thank you, Cre-a-tor, I am strong. Oh Cre-a-tor, I am strong as a bear.  
Ya - na yo - ni ya ho way ha nay Ya - na yo - ni ya ho way ha nay  
yo - ni ya ho way ha nay hay ha nay Ya - na yo - ni ya ho way ha nay

# I Am a Hollow Bamboo

Music by Nan Koehler



Verse 2:

I am a hollow bamboo.  
Open up, let the baby come through.

Verse 3:

I am a hollow bamboo.  
Open up, love shines through.

# We All Come From God

Music from *Songs of the Earth* by Anna Kealoha

Verse 2:

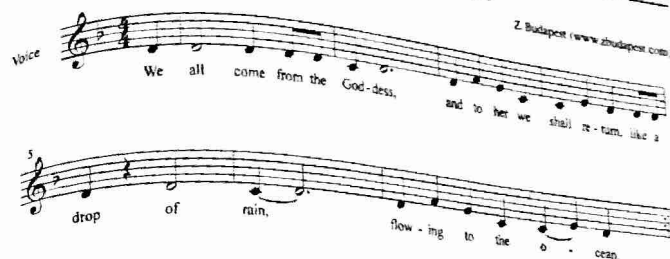
Like a ray of light, returning to the sun.

Verse 3:

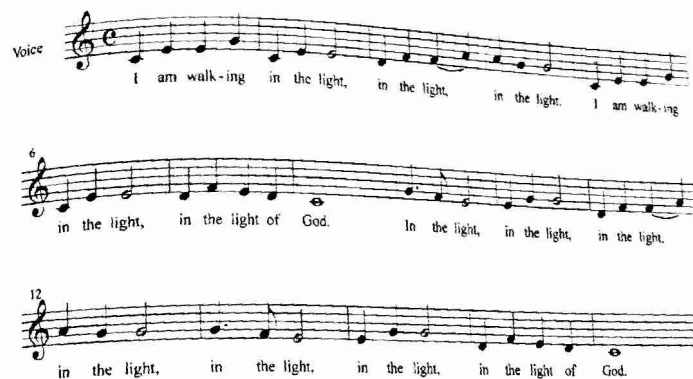
Like a drop of water, flowing to the sea.

# We All Come from the Goddess

Z Budapest (www.zbudapest.com)



# I Am Walking in the Light of God



### This Little Light of Mine

Traditional African-American Music transcription by Laz Slomovits of "Gemini" Reprinted with permission.

Soloist Chorus

This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.

This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine O-o-oh,

this lit-tle light of mine. I'm gon-na let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

#### Verse 1

Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine (3x)  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

#### Verse 2

All over the world, I'm gonna let it shine (3X)  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

### Woman, Wisdom

Music from Circle of Song Songs, Chants and Dances for Ritual and Celebration (www.circleofsong.com). Reprinted by permission.

Wo-man, wis-dom, wo-man O wey O wis-dom,  
Ya na wa na ya na o wey o ya na

Wo-man, wis-dom, wo-man O wey O wis-dom, Wo-man, wis-dom, wo-man O  
Ya na wa na ya na o wey o ya na yo na wa na ya na o

wey O wis-dom, Wo-man, wis-dom, wo-man O wey O wis-dom,  
wey o ya na Ya na wa na ya na o wey o ya na

Wo-man, wis-dom, wo-man O wey ho hey ne yo wen,  
Ya na wa na ya na o wey ho he ne yo wey



Time Is a River

Julie Bos

Time is a riv-er und the riv-er flows free. Love is c-ter-nal like you and me. As  
one we bring these spir-its to earth. Thank you for this chance to give birth.

May the Blessings of the Goddess Rest Upon You

Sufi Song

May the bless-ings of the Godd-ess rest up - on you. May Her peace a-bide in  
you. May Her pre-sence ill - u - min-ate your heart now and for-ev - er more.

eco-Christian version, the word Goddess may be replaced with God.

Start the Day With Love

Sanya Sai Baba

Start the day with love, spend the day with love,  
end the day with love, sweet love, for that's the way to God.

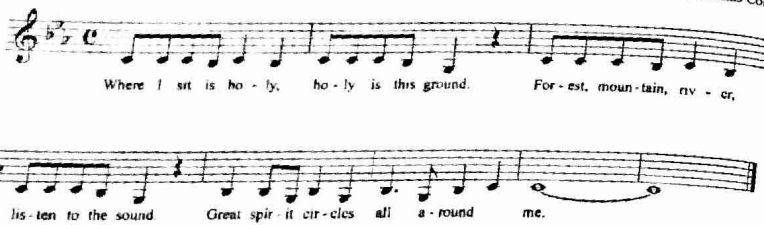
Dream-Time

Onba Druay

Dream - time, Dream - time. Wake up to the  
1. Dream - time. 2. Dream - time. Keep your feet on the ground and your  
head in the stars. Dance your dream a - wake. Keep your  
feet on the ground and your head in the stars. Dance your dream a - wake.  
Dream your dance a - wake.

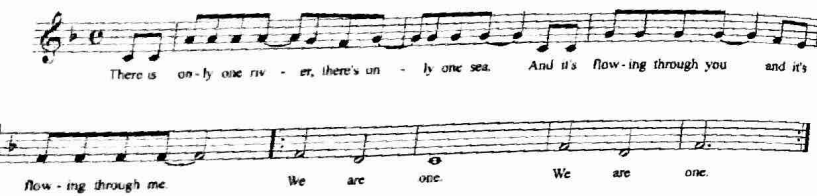
### Where I Sit Is Holy

Music from *Songs to the Goddess* by Artemis College



In *Circle of Song*, Kate Marks suggests adding your own verses such as "Where we sing is holy, sacred is this place, as we breathe together, we fill with light and grace."

### There's Only One River



### The Earth, the Air, the Fire, the Water



### Goes Out Like a Wave

Mickey Spickard, 1969

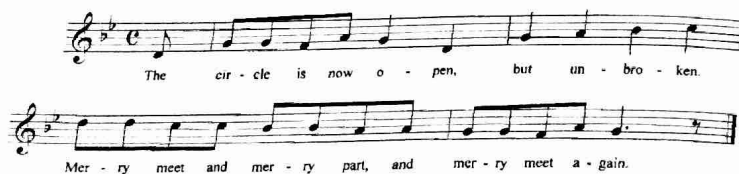


## Child of Mine



## The Circle Is Open

Music from *Circle of Song: Songs, Chants and Dances for Ritual and Celebration* (www.circleofsong.com). Reprinted by permission.



I particularly love this end-of-ceremony chant because it really expresses the essence of Blessingway — that the beneficent energy created on that day will be carried within each person, and will be felt every time they see or remember the honoree and one another.

## Songs for Blessingways

## We Are Sisters On a Journey

Mariena Fontana. Reprinted by permission from *Circle of Song*.



## Verse 2:

We are sisters on a journey,  
singing in the sun,  
remembering the ancient ones,  
the women and the wisdom,  
the women and the wisdom.

## Verse 3:

We are sisters on a journey  
standing at the door,  
remembering what passed long ago.  
Let's turn the key once more  
Let's turn the key once more.

## Verse 4:

We are sisters on a journey  
watching life unfold,  
sharing warmth of heart and hands,  
the knowledge of the old,  
the knowledge of the old.

In *Circle of Song*, Kate Marks suggests doing a circle dance to accompany this song. She says: "Dance in a circle, doing the grapevine step. (One step in front, one step in back.) As you step back, honor the past; as you step forward, honor the future. Hold hands throughout, raising and lowering them slowly in rhythm with the music. Think of the ebb and flow of life, of the bonding of women in sisterhood throughout time."

## As We Bless

Faith Rogow Reprinted with permission from *The Courage to Dare*

As we bless the Source of Life, so we are blessed.

As we bless the Source of Life, so we are blessed. And the bless-ing gives us

strength, and makes our vis-ions clear. And the bless-ing gives us peace, and the

cour-age to dare. As we bless the Source of Life, so we are

blessed. As we bless the Source of Life, so we are blessed.

## from I Honor You

Robert Gass Reprinted with permission from *Trust in Me*

To you, dear wo-man of the earth, whose act of love gave bless-ing to my

birth. You gave your blood and breath that I might come to be. Then from your

womb, you worked to push me free. Your love I nev-er had to earn. You took de-

light in most ev-ry thing I learned. Oh, my moth-er who taught me what it

means to give, you gave your-self, that I might live. I hon-or

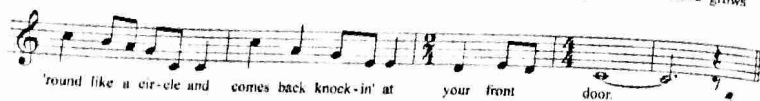
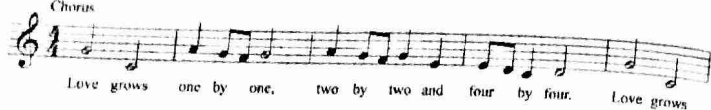
you, light be-ing that you are, I hon-or you, for lov-ing me so true, I hon-or

you, in the tem-ple of my heart.

### Love Grows One By One

Carol Johnson, © 1981, Noekdner Music, BMI, 900 Calvert SE, Grand Rapids MI 49506 From the recording *Might As Well Make It Love* Used by permission

Chorus



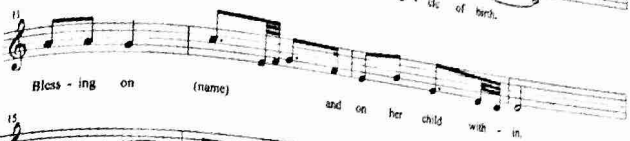
Verse



### Blessings on All Children

SKIPPY AND TURTLES - 209

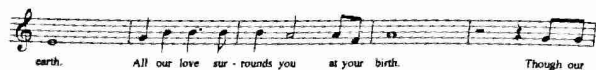
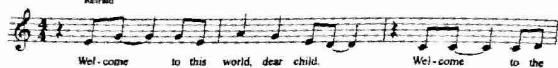
Barb Meyer



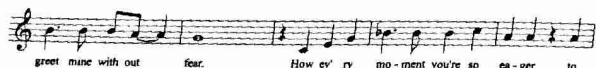
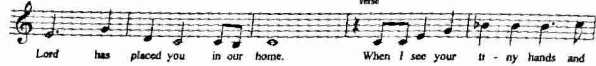
## Welcome to This World

Robert Gass Reprinted with permission from *Trust in Love*.

Refrain



Verse



Verse 2

I'd like to share with you a love for life  
 That God has shown to me.  
 I'd like to share with you  
 The hills, the sky, the sea.  
 To dance like waves upon the shoreline,  
 Like stars on a summer's night,  
 Reflect the darkness with the glow of heaven's light.  
 (Refrain)

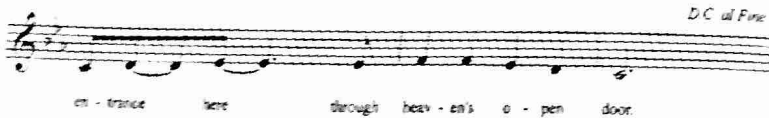
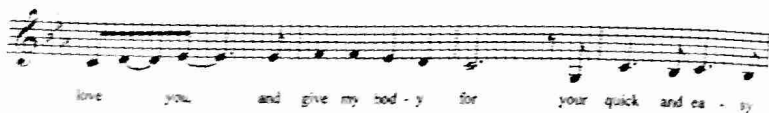
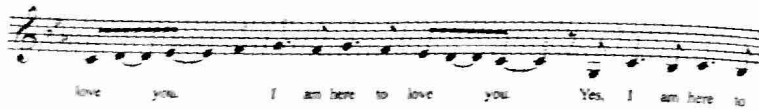
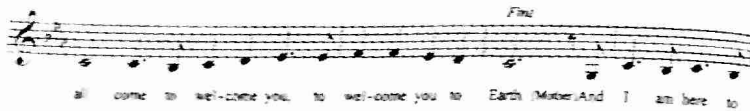
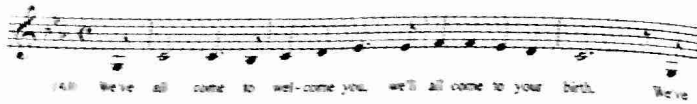
## The New Birthday Song

Reprinted with permission from *Songs for Earthlings* ©1998 Julie Forest  
 Middleton Emerald Earth Publishing, Sebastopol, CA (www.EmeraldEarth.net)



Many women like to replace the words *just for you* with *we love you*.  
 Julie Forest Middleton says, "I hate the birthday ritual where there's only one wish  
 made and then the person blows germs all over the cake! Some years ago I made up  
 another: everyone gets a votive candle and makes a wish (out loud) for the birthday  
 person's next year. Then you all blow the candle flames out into the universe. This  
 variation on the birthday cake ritual seems ideal for a Blessingway."

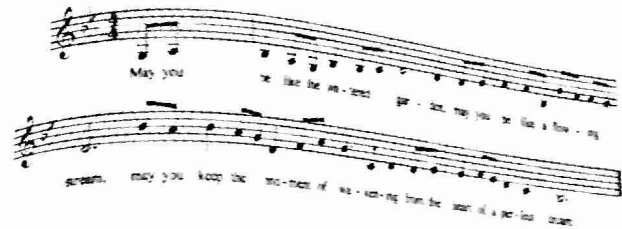
# We've All Come to Welcome You



*D.C. al Fine*

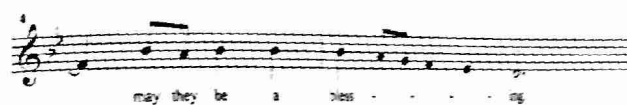
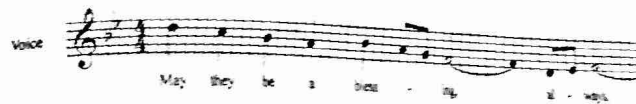
# A Blessing for Children (round)

Linda Hirschhorn, as recorded on *Roots and Wings* (Orion Productions Box 9925 Berkeley CA 94705). Adapted with permission.  
 Sing verse 1 and 2 then go back to verse 1 to end the song.  
 The second stanza is the 10th measure (repeat) of verse 1, so you can give it.



Verse 2:  
 May the warmth of the Earth surround you,  
 may the passion of wonder fill your days,  
 may the strength of your friendship sustain you,  
 and your children be blessed always.

*Descant*



## Sample Readings and Suggested Sources of Readings

Choosing readings is a very personal and intuitive process. I do not presume to tell you what will make the "best" readings for your Blessingway, but I would like to share a sampling of possibilities. What follows are some favorites of the women I interviewed.

### Pregnancy and Birth

from **Our Mother's Body is the Earth**  
Mary McAnally

Our mother's body is the earth,  
her aura the air, her spirit  
is in the middle, round like an egg,  
and she contains all good things in herself,  
like a honeycomb.

Birth is the pinnacle where women discover the courage to become mothers.  
— Anita Diamant, from *The Red Tent*

The hips, they are wide for a reason, inside them is a satiny ivory cradle for new life. A woman's hips are outriggers for the body above and below; they are portals, they are a lush cushion, the handholds for love, a place for children to hide behind.  
— Clarissa Pinkola Estes, from *Women Who Run With the Wolves*

You are preparing for the unknown, and once you are prepared, you are still before the doorway to the unknown. However, you are calm and relaxed at the entrance. You accept the unknown and accept the inability to control it, necessitating your



yielding to it. Your strength lies in your confidence to open that door and begin the journey through unknown territory. This confidence influences the journey itself.

— This is a paraphrasing of a passage from *Birthing Normally* by Gayle Peterson

My friend Cindy shared the following affirmations aloud, then presented the mother with a stack of notecards inscribed with them.

#### Pregnancy affirmations:

- ⌘ My body is beautiful and strong.
- ⌘ My baby and I are ready for the divine plan of our lives to unfold.
- ⌘ I love being pregnant.
- ⌘ I have time for this pregnancy in my life.

#### Birth Affirmations:

- ⌘ I send love to my baby and call him to my arms.
- ⌘ I accept the healthy pain of labor, if and when it is here.
- ⌘ I am opening.
- ⌘ I am calm and relaxed. My baby feels my calmness and shares it.
- ⌘ I am strong and I can let my contractions be strong.
- ⌘ Strong contractions are good contractions.
- ⌘ Contractions help my baby to be born.
- ⌘ The baby and I are ready for the work we will do.
- ⌘ My contractions are massaging the baby and hugging it.
- ⌘ My body knows how to give birth and I will let it.
- ⌘ I feel the love of those who are helping me.

#### Postpartum Affirmations:

- ⌘ I share in the strength and wisdom of all mothers.
- ⌘ I am adjusting to life with my new baby.
- ⌘ I am a good parent to my child.
- ⌘ My needs are important.

During normal childbirth your baby does not feel pain... The baby's sensation is one of healthy stimulation — stress but not distress. Your baby is massaged by your uterine contractions, and you may think of your contractions as hugging your baby, as he or she moves through labor...

Your baby's head molds easily, fitting through the cervix as it opens. You might imagine how pleasant it can feel to have hands cupped around your head, as often happens during a massage... And so it is for your baby...

Like many women, you may feel protective of your baby during labor. It can be comforting to visualize the normal labor process as a stimulating massage for your baby.

— Gayle Peterson, from *An Easier Childbirth*

No force of mind or body can drive a woman in labor; by patience only can the smooth force of nature be followed.

— Grantly Dick-Read, from *Childbirth Without Fear*

Birth is not a beginning... The true beginning is at conception. Nor is birth an ending. It is more nearly a bridge between two stages of life, and although the bridge is not a long one, a child crosses it slowly, so that his body may be ready when he steps off at the far end.

— Ashley Montagu, from *Life Before Birth*

#### Babies and Motherhood

Each child carries his own blessing into the world.

— Yiddish Proverb

In the baby lies the future of the world. The mother must hold him close so he will know the world is his. The father must take him to the highest hill so he can see what his world is like.

— Mayan Indian saying