When Alina turned 6 months old, I wrote her this letter

Dear Alina,

Everyone who sees you says, “Look how big she’s grown!” Of course, that’s just something people say when they see babies, but most of them really mean it when they see you.

There was a lot of stress in our family shortly after you were born. You must have felt it because your weight faltered for a few weeks. Holding you at my breast every second of every minute of every hour of every day, you just didn’t seem to absorb anything that went in you. You went from the middle of the curve to the bottom in the first month of your life.

Maybe you just needed time to catch up. Or maybe you needed Mommy to eat more bacon and drink whole milk (which I did without complaint). Whatever it was, you are back on track. You are chubby and full of smiles! And I thank God for that fact every day.

You are like your sister, Melise, in so many ways. You look like she did as a baby. You like the same toys. Your mood turns quickly when you’re handed off to someone unfamiliar. And you love to blow raspberries!

You are your own person, though. You are my quiet baby. You take the world in stride, not crying out until you are sure that it is absolutely necessary. You lay back and watch when I’m helping your sister with something. And you patiently hang out on my hip when I’m doing chores around the house.

Don’t worry, little girl, you are never forgotten no matter how quiet you are. Mommy and your big sister always have their eyes on you. I hold you so much of the day that I feel off balance when you are not in my arms! And Melise is training you as a co-conspirator in trouble, I just know it.

You laugh at all her antics (the most delightful chuckle!), which just encourages her to do more. I know that you two will turn me gray early!

I also know that this is a special time for you as you turn 6 months old. Your personality is blossoming as you start moving and talking. By talking, I just mean babbles and squeals, but there is a lot of meaning behind it all. And your movements are barely wiggles and accidental roll-overs, but it's a start! I can see the spark of independence in your eyes already!

It's so funny to think that such a short while ago I didn't know you. How could there ever have been a time when you weren't a part of my life? Although I can't see it, I know that somewhere you are actually connected to my being—at the hip, maybe? Or by a heartstring? There isn't an amputation in the world that could separate us now!

Someday you will grow up. You may move far away from me and hardly ever call, as children often do. But, even then, you will still be a part of me. And someday—SOMEDAY—you will look at a picture of me, old and gray, and your first thought will be: Will I look like that when I'm old? But your second thought will be that your mom is always with you, a part of you, no matter how old you get. And she loves you.

And your third thought will be that you need to call your sister and be reassured that you aren't starting to look like your old mom ...

Love, Mommy

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