



## What I know about becoming a woman...



*for Karla*

It is one of the most exquisitely painfully beautiful things that happens on the planet: a girl becoming a woman, that is.

It happens overnight sometimes. And then you feel like a girl again. And then grow slowly as if through childhood once more, and then a lightning bolt of maturity strikes here and there. And then back to feeling like a girl again. And then you realize...

*Knowing yourself -- as you are unlike any advertisement, or relative, or popular person-- is the greatest treasure of womanhood.*

Feeling beautiful to yourself is more important than trying to look beautiful to anyone else in particular.

Because, if they don't see your beauty, it means they are blind.

And women know that they like to be around people who can *see*

When I became a woman, it was like a slow creeping ivy surrounding me, and protecting me from unwelcome gazes. And then one day it all bloomed into flowers.

Becoming a woman is like playing a melody, and then the deep resonant chords come up underneath and vibrate the ground you walk on... People move to the pulse of a woman being herself

Becoming a woman is like having a fairy tale castle in your imagination, and a tool belt to build it in your backyard.

Becoming a woman is like stretching a little too far, and nursing your sore muscles...

until you realize you are taller

Then you stand like you like your own height, and sometimes wear high-heels to accentuate the stature you have earned.

And then you dance, and the soreness falls away.  
Onto the shiny floor of water.

Sometimes a girl will want to know things from you  
And you will speak heart to heart about what really matters.

And you both will just know,

What is really important

What I know about becoming a woman is that it is scary, for a split second. Just like  
when you cover your eyes part-way in a horror movie....

Except that when you remove your fingers you see a sparkle in front of your  
eyes of gorgeous rings. They are yours.

And then you look at the movie screen and see the credits rolling

...And your name is on it.

What I know about becoming a woman is that it is medicine for the planet. Good strong  
medicine. For women talk kindly to children and animals and tend to the sick and  
injured. And women love their Mother Earth, for they are sisters Deep Down.

The medicine is bitter-sweet.  
And it works.

What I know about becoming a woman is that it is sunshine in winter. The air is still  
cool, but the light makes the snow brilliant diamonds.

... and then a child makes a snow-angel in the snow

... and it is your child.

What I know about becoming a woman is that lots of people will want a piece of your  
pie, a scoop from your sundae. Because it tastes so good, and they are hungry to be fed.

What I know about becoming a woman is that you have a piece and a scoop (or  
two!) first before you give the rest away...

And those who you don't feel like feeding, you don't have to.

And then you make an even better pie for yourself next time. And maybe later you'll want to feed that fool. Or just eat a big sweet banana split with your best friend instead.

What I know about becoming a woman is that some folks will try to help you. And those are the ones to watch. Because they just might not know how strong you really are.

What I know is that a woman knows how strong she really is, but shows her muscle only when it suits her fancy.

What I know about being a woman is that things like battles, and heroes, and victors and nobility are so important.... to most *men*....

...and therefore, a woman learns so well that she can even instruct her sons if need be, even if those things are but trifles in Her Own Worldly Journey

When I became a woman, I told my story. Or telling my story made me a woman... or both. And yet,

As a woman I know not to throw pearls before swine.

Because a woman's story is the finest pearls on a strand of infinity...

What I know about becoming a woman is that there is an ache. It is in the heart for love, and for sadness, and for living, and for loss. And it feels like that ache will be a gaping hole that can swallow up the world ...

what I know about becoming a woman, is that sometimes it does. And then we fill the hole with our stories, and the ache is soothed with our own salve. And for a while... we are healed.

And then we pray to God to let it all happen all over again.

**Because being a woman means being alive**

And becoming a woman means waking up by a kiss from a prince

Except that he turns into a frog, or something, and then

We go for a walk in the morning dew

And a Strong, Real Man blushes

And stumbles on his words to meet you.

What I know about becoming a woman is that fairy tales and dreams do come true  
Because we dream in Technicolor, and our fairy tales are memorized.

But we learn to disguise them as practical things: education, working, sharing, teaching,  
spending, building, cooking. We throw suspicion off our enormous power to Grow  
Love with talk of hammers and nails, walmart and college.

We climb mountains in our lacey underwear. And toss a salt shaker over our shoulder  
for good luck.

...except we don't need it because we are zesty with pepper.

And we make our own luck with every step up.

What I know about becoming a woman is smiling inside a lot

And smiling outside only when we feel like it

What I know about becoming a woman is that lessons are really just beginning. And the  
more we know, the more we know we do not know.

But this doesn't scare a woman

Because she is artful with the mysterious

As she paints her toenails and then puts on thick wool socks.

What I know about becoming a woman is that You are in for the ride of your lives.  
Because as a woman you will live more than nine in one

Because women are gifted like that.

God likes to have them around.

***Happy Birthday Karla,  
But even more importantly, Amazing Womanhood to You.***

***With love from your Big Sister,***