

Time to fly

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 05 May 2011 13:59 -



Edges ever closer.

“Don’t expect me to sit with you on the bus,” my daughter exclaimed matter of factly the other day.

“I won’t,” I shot back.

This missive from the 15-year-old who, several weeks ago, became weepy about the thought of leaving home when college calls.

On that day, Betsy had wandered around the house looking intently at some of the possessions we both take for granted.

She peered for a long time at a family photo taken with our horses which shows a smiling 7-year-old in a cowboy hat holding the reins to a palomino pony.

I watched her brush her hand over glass protecting the face of a silent grandfather clock which used to chime the hour of day in my grandmother’s house.

Betsy told me she wanted it ticking and chiming before she graduated from high school.

Settling herself on a couch in the parlor, she gazed out a window and saw her favorite cat stroll haughtily down the driveway.

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A few minutes later, we were hurrying down the sidewalk to a birthday party as spats of rain freckled our faces.

Halfway to our destination, I glanced at my daughter and realized that some of the drops on her face were not from the gray, swollen sky.

She told me she was crying because, while wandering around the house, she realized she would be leaving its familiarity in three years.

The creak of the century-old stairway, the rabbit-soft fur of her black cat and the unconditional love of her mother would be too far away to hear, touch and feel.

Other mothers have warned me how moments of time trickle faster through the hourglass once their children start high school.

Now I understand.

“We need to try and stay in the here and now,” I told her, a lump forming in my throat. “That way it will last longer.”

Such a meaningful connection on a rain-spattered sidewalk seemed miles away when I listened to her off-handed comment about not wanting me seated next to her on a bus full of choral students bound for Omaha.

But I reassured myself it was just a fluttering of wings.

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And also a gentle reminder that she's edging ever closer to the rim of the nest.