

Excerpts Mavis

I think I'm pregnant. I look at the words I've written and smile. They don't tell how I feel. I say them aloud softly. I sound like a young girl.

Suddenly I can't sit still any longer. I get up and dance around the room. I catch a glimpse of my face in the mirror. I've never seen myself like this before. The hair at my temples is streaked with silver. There are lines at the corner of my mouth. But my eyes . . . my eyes . . . It's as though they can see something I can't. They are soft with dreams.

That's what the baby is. The fulfilment of a dream. The thing is, though, it's a dream I never knew I had.

I thought I was perfectly content with Edwin and the boys. They're nearly grown. Philip has just started university. Michael is in his final year at high school.

Our lives have been ordinary. Middle-class. We've almost paid off the mortgage. Edwin is a high school teacher. I'm a homemaker. I always grimace when I have to write it down.

But Edwin won't let me feel demeaned. 'You are my wife,' he says with dignity. 'My boys' mother. That's enough for me. It ought to be enough for you.'

And really it has been. Keeping the house nice, the garden, entertaining our few friends.

'You add elegance to our lives,' Edwin says.

I laugh, embarrassed. I know I'm too sensible to be elegant.

But Edwin is insistent. 'I'm a plain man,' he explains. 'You're something extra I didn't expect.'

I thought I was content. I thought I had everything a woman could want.

But now . . . My thoughts go spinning in all directions. I can hardly keep up with them. A baby. A little girl. A daughter. Something of my own.

I'm perplexed, though. I thought I understood myself. That's why I keep on looking at my reflection in the mirror. It's as though I'm someone else. A stranger with my face