

*“My child, never forget that this too shall pass; there is nothing permanent in life. Our lives on this earth might be an illusion. We think we are in control, yet the truth is that we are to be transported by waves of events, circumstances, and conditions that come and go. And as the events come and go, you will see that your life changes in so many ways—at times to your advantage, at times otherwise. Throughout it all, as much as we should not let success intoxicate our sobriety, so in the same way, we should not allow hard times to kill our spirit. Remember always that it all passes, my child. It all passes. And only when you realize this impermanence, will you be free of attachment—therefore free to live fully without being caught up in the constrictions and illusions you might be facing.”* –Lady Almaz Haile Mariam (Almazesha, my grandmother)

I remember Almazesha saying this to me again and again, and through the years my interpretation of her message changed along with my own evolving level of consciousness and understanding of life. Through the pages to come, I hope to share the stories and wisdom I have inherited from her throughout my life. As much as this book is about sharing the story of my relationship with my grandmother, it is also a personal process to reflect on my life, and to reflect on the events that have shaped our lives as a family, both in the sense of a community and also in our own individuality. This story is about generations, changing times, and holding to culture and tradition despite the impact of immigration, despite the challenges of trying to adapt to change in its many forms, and despite the pull of modernity, globalization, and the subsequent fragmentation of the family. This is the story of the constant negotiations between the way it used to be and the way life has come to be.

*(Excerpt from “Forget Not The Sparrows - An African Story: Unfinished Conversation with My Grandmother” - Yene Assegid, PhD – Expected Publication Date: September 2011).*

