

*A Special 21st to
Belinda*

Love, Auntie Julie

A Special 21st to Belinda

Love, Mum

By Katharine McLennan
(Note: my name and branding footer
would NOT appear on your poem)

The first daughter we had turns 21 this year
This poem to celebrate a life so very dear
To our family, to her friends, to her future kith and kin
Let us toast our beautiful woman, and the great love she always been

She was born in the tenth month of 1982
After a very long time in labour her mother finally knew
That a girl had arrived, the first of our Breakfast Club bunch
Holding her in St Vincent's, I think I had a hunch

That she would be vivacious and lively like my dear love Kel ,
Intelligent and creative like her godmother Michelle
A girl who would easily win her father's adoration
A girl who would thrive from her mother's vocation

An honour it was to have been so close to you
In your first year of life, and how time flew
I remember the glass that made us all gasp
Your resilience, your grace, how little did we then grasp

An honour it was to have you as this generation's first girl
So confident at age 3, in your gorgeous dress frill
What an honour it was to see you hold Joy
You were so delighted it was a girl, and not a boy

What an honour it was to be the mother to you
To watch you as held Joy, and then there were two
Two girls that lit up 18 Fern house and family
Two girls who would expand the Fennen clan grandly

And Lloyd arrived and his cousin Jilly was there
A boy! My goodness, an event reasonably rare
Thank you, Gracie, for being the elder mediator
When Lloyd is being teased by Joy, an argument generator

Over the 90s you grew into your first decade
Through St Mary's, through netball, adventures forayed Lake
Conjola and road trips, camping and swimming
Mount Warning, Fordham and Minto families brimming

Over the naughties you became the first teenager we knew
As we all learned about mood swings, from joyous to blue
We watched as the Loyola uniform was dutifully donned
And a serious student and lifelong friend was creatively spawned

How impressed I'll always be as I remember your study
For the HSC Biology, your mind so far from muddy
The elegance you wrote with, the passion you exhibited
The diligence you applied, and the humour unlimited

And proud as we are all of your Sydney Science degree
We know that your Grandfather Burt would be up there with a decree
Ordering us to remember your kindness and your adventure
Your spirit, your honesty, even more important than this credential

A spirit that gives you the courage to go where few people might travel
To study a language that for the majority of us would unravel
To Berlin you are going as you turn 21 years,
An age of adulthood, far beyond the childhood fears

I remember well when I was your age
And study was finished and dating became the next stage
Little did I know that it was Kel that I'd marry
And then to have a baby, first born I'd carry

Little did I know that I would become a Fennen
As the Scottish would ask, how could I have “kennen ?”
How could I have known how wonderful a clan
So loving and supporting with a great heart and span

What a gift you have been over these 21 years
A proper Hogwarts Witch would be delivering thousands of cheers
For the woman you have become and the woman you will be
For the lovers, the friends who will bask in your sea

I wish I could be there but the dementors have muddled
My travel towards Hogwarts has been completely befuddled
So, I will send my virtual owl to wish you Birthday Cheer
To tell you I love you, and to celebrate this 21st year

So, lift your glass, and toast the moment.
That’s all that there is, no need for torment.
About pasts that can't change, about futures that don't exist
About flaws, about jealousies, about pain that persists.

Thank God for our humanness, and thank God for this life.
Thank God for this music which seems so rife.
It teaches us of love, of tenderness, and care,
Of friendship, of honour, of giving beyond compare.

God grant us the serenity, God grant us the love
And steer us towards Heaven, which need not exist above.
Show us the way to Heaven here on Earth,
I trust Your guidance, and I honour Our worth.

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