

# 18 Weeks

TW: Miscarriage



K-CULTURE WITH JAE-HA KIM

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Photo by [Matt Hardy](#)

After two previous miscarriages <sup>1</sup>, I was pregnant again and had made it into my second trimester. The non-stop morning sickness finally ended, my belly was round and firm, and I finally broke down and bought some maternity clothes. The ultrasounds, heart beat monitorings and genetic testing all showed a healthy baby

growing inside of me. As we shared the news with our family and friends, my husband and I felt happy and secure.

For four and a half months, I carried our baby. And then just one day after a nervous trip to the Emergency Room confirmed that the baby was OK, I miscarried. Our little baby was gone.

It is a horrible thing for anyone to lose a loved one, but when you lose a child that hasn't yet been born, you feel an incredible amount of guilt that maybe you could have prevented this miscarriage. In my brain, I knew I hadn't done anything wrong. But in my heart, it was completely different. Maybe if I had eaten more in the first trimester, the baby would have survived. If I had slept on my left side more often than on the right, perhaps the baby would've gotten more oxygen. I felt guilty for complaining about all the back pain this little being was causing me. I was heartsick that just days ago, I had been worrying about what to do with all the furniture in our guest room when we converted the space into the baby's room. And I cried when I thought about all the times I resented the baby because I couldn't eat sushi or drink coffee because I was pregnant. What kind of selfish mother was I?

This baby — our child — was a symbol of our future. As we watched him grow over the months, we grew more and more in love with this little being that evolved from a raspberry-like image into a wiggly little baby. Even seeing his full bladder as a tiny black dot in the ultrasound was adorable to us.

We did the best we could and so had our baby. We took solace in the fact that if he was too weak to survive, we didn't want him to suffer any more than he already may have. There was no medical reason why our baby didn't survive and there are no assurances that this won't happen to us again.

As the doctor removed the last remnants of the placenta from my uterus, I sobbed — not from the pain, but from piercing sadness. My husband held my hand and cried along with me. I could not have loved him any more than I did then. The grief that we felt was indescribable, but the fact that we had each other to love made it bearable.

Our family and friends mourned the loss along with us. As my mother struggled to control her voice so she wouldn't cry, she admitted she had been looking forward to

the baby's first kick.

Maybe I was just trying to make my mother feel better, but as I said the words, I realized they were true: Yes, it's horrible that I miscarried. But this little baby also brought us immense joy during the 18 weeks I was pregnant. Every day, my husband beamed as he touched my expanding belly. He joked that the baby was in a hurry to grow up and be held. My conversations with my parents — which had sometimes been filled with my impatience to get off the phone — were easy going and filled with laughter. We spoke often and lovingly about what it would be like in a few more months when the baby was born.

My mother would make homemade *muguk*/무국 — nutritious beef and radish soup — and drive over with my father, who was very sick at that time. She wanted to feed my baby but, more importantly, she wanted to feed *her* baby. (My final miscarriage would be after my father's funeral.)

In a few months, when our baby was due, we will see our neighborhood expand. Three women living within a few blocks from us are set to deliver around the same time I was. Instead of being resentful and jealous of their joy, I look forward to celebrating their happiness when they bring home their infants.

While I still grieve the loss of our baby, I also honor his memory by taking time to remember all the happiness he brought to our lives. His legacy remains with my husband and me. When I think about the miscarriage, I no longer recall the physical pain, but rather how brave and gentle my husband was, suppressing his own anguish to comfort and care for me.

There's nothing you can do to change the past, but appreciating what you have in the present goes a long way in helping with the healing process.

For my husband and me, our sense of security was taken away with this miscarriage. There is no guarantee for any of us that there will be a tomorrow. Life is fragile and is meant to be appreciated every day, even when it includes a loss.

*\* I wrote drafts of this essay in 2006 and 2015.*

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1 80 percent of miscarriages occur during the first trimester of pregnancy, according to the [Cleveland Clinic](#). 10 to 20 percent of all pregnancies end in miscarriage. This percentage is higher for women 40 years old and over.



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Nora Brosseau  Nov 26

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♥ Liked by K-Culture with Jae-Ha Kim

Thank you for sharing something deeply personal. Miscarriage needs to be more than a whisper. How you write about the love for your husband is beautiful.

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1 reply by K-Culture with Jae-Ha Kim



Julia Turlington Nov 26

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♥ Liked by K-Culture with Jae-Ha Kim

I am so sorry for your loss. Thank you for writing this.