

APPLE
writers in the attic

Apple is the shining symbol of health, and the moniker of a famous daughter. Long rumored as the forbidden fruit that transferred the knowledge of good and evil, this mischievous object bonked Newton on the head and defined the laws of gravity. Loosely Latin for domestic evil, this is the poisonous vessel of Snow White's deep sleep, and the rotten core of a schoolyard bully—but also the sole object on earth holding the doctor at bay day after day. Along with Steve Jobs and his turtlenecks, our theme is the logo of California's progressive tech mammoth, and the same golden objects Hera gave Zeus as a wedding gift, where they reside in a garden at the northern-most edge of the world. You are the apple of my eye, my favorite kind of pie...

The Cabin is a Boise, Idaho literary arts organization. We forge community through the voices of all readers, writers, and learners. Writing Camps nurture the imagination and awaken the senses through creative adventures in the art of writing.

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"APP'N"
Kyle Boggs

He cried for the first six months of his life and we never knew why. Colic? Reflux? Constipation? Was it something in the sauce? He didn't sleep. Nights blurred into days. We tried everything. We read everything. Advice felt like attacks. Family came in shifts to help, but nobody really could.

Two years later, I do not take his laughter for granted as I shuffle the shopping cart into the checkout. He pushes the nylon seatbelt taut in both directions, trying to reach a Snickers on one side and the impulse buys on the other--5-Hour Energy, Chapstick, eyeglass repair kit. The aisle is too narrow for this; when I move the cart away from his grasp on one side, the other becomes an easy target. He thinks this is funny. I continue this dance, his messy afternoon nap hair waving back and forth while I place items onto the conveyor: almond milk, a dozen eggs, bananas, a handful of apples, and a lavender/chanonmile infused bath bomb--my own impulse buy.

"App'n." He hands me a sticky, bruised, and partially eaten apple I forgot he had. Apple is both one of his first words and one of his favorite foods, so I didn't hesitate to let him hold one so he wouldn't cry.

He is still a bad sleeper, and I have zero faith in the bath bomb's promise of "peace, restfulness, and serenity." If he has even one "boog" in his nose, he won't sleep at all, which is the main reason for the bath. It is better now, and I remind myself of that, watching the bath bomb mingle with the apples as the cashier begins to scan. "Gotcher hands full there."

Back before any of his mysteries were solved, I discovered one evening that I could make him quiet and drowsy by doing squats. Not the quick up and down jiggle that dads are supposedly so good at, but full-on strength-training perfect-form squats one does at the gym. We alternated, doing hundreds of them. It worked for a while until it didn't. "Move his bedtime up," they'd say. He cried longer. "Add epsom salts to his bath," they'd say. Nothing. "My little one just falls straight to sleep in the car." Really? Cause mine just screams. "Did you try turning the lights low, and reading him a book?" Are you kidding me? Nearly every single person over 65 in our life told us about how back in the day they'd drop a little whiskey in baby's

mouths. "You know what, it worked," my dad would joke but not joke.

We didn't try whiskey but we tried anything else our late night Google searches suggested. We bought a sound machine. He cried. We hung black-out curtains. He cried. We adjusted his diet. He cried. We bought an essential oil diffuser and alternated lavender and chamomile and in the morning we discussed which one seemed to make him cry less. If we let him cry, thinking he'd surely stop soon, he would cry so hard he'd throw up. The crying made us sick too, not the cry itself as much as the fact that we were the ones who were supposed to know how to make him stop, and so often we couldn't. We bought the "Baby Merlin Magic Sleepsuit." Still he cried, now a frustrated cry because he also couldn't move. We longed for real magic, a pill, a spell, a tincture. How peaceful Snow White looked in those cartoons, laying on a pillow with pink petals falling softly all around her.

"There must be something we can give him," we'd ask the doctor, the Internet, friends. But there wasn't. But there were occasional, and short lived, breakthroughs.

I remember when he nearly fell asleep on me as we swayed slowly in the kitchen listening to Nick Cave, so I played *The Boatman's Call* every night for a month even though it never worked again. On a particularly bad evening, I thought I'd bring him outside, and to my surprise he stopped crying and I softly sang my own version of "Danny Says," which was in my head that day when we learned we were moving. *Daddy says we gotta go | gotta go to Idaho*. It worked. We took him outside with the dogs every night and he would doze with orange blossoms on the evening breeze.

"He can hold on to that one," the cashier gave a sideways grin as she double scans one of the other Fuji apples. He raises it above his head, "App'ml!" The woman behind us laughs so he tries to give it to her.

"No thanks, honey," I have my own apples. She points at her bag of Granny Smiths. I smile back at her in the same way I smile at anyone who lovingly humors us in public and I swipe my credit card. While making faces at him, she tells me about her grandchildren; one of them she says is about his age and she is on her way to see them. The other contents of her cart indicate a cobbler or perhaps a pie might soon be in the works. I imagined her stepping up to some door, knocking as she en-

tered to the sound of dogs barking, kids yelling, and the TV on.

"Oh, this is someone else's Mimi," I tell him, expecting to blow his little toddler mind as I gesture to her. I watch his expression go flat and I wonder if he is thinking of my mom on the other side of the country. The last time he was in Tennessee, we were in the middle of moving from Florida to Idaho. We'd stopped there for a week to visit and regroup. On the day we left she helped us pack, and said she was happy for us. There would be job security, and oh how we had missed the mountains. Yet the sadness in her eyes told a different story.

The trauma of the move erased any of the progress we thought we made. Nobody slept for weeks. Was it the time change? The change in climate? Did our anxiety affect him? New city, same mysteries. Months later, when our adopted city froze over, we still believed in the late night walks, and joked that our new neighbors would see us out in the cold and call CPS. We were on our own, wandering aimlessly on little sleep below the sway of bare apple trees.

Later that night, when the weight of the day boiled over, signalling to us to begin the familiar "bath, book, bottle, bed" routine, I enticed him into the tub with the promise that he could throw in the bath bomb and that it would be "like magic." From behind my back, I present the bomb, an orb swirling with green and purple, and his blue eyes grow larger. He looks at it with all of the wonder of a two year old, grabs it, and puts it to his open mouth, triggering my reflexes.

His smile fades quickly.

"No, no, baby; this is not food."

"App'ml!"

"No, watch, remember? This is magic for your bath."

He cries as I plop it into the warm water. The ensuing fizz snaps him out of it and we both stare as a deep purple swells up around him.

He grabs at it in the water and watches it turn into nothing in his hand.

"Maag." He looks up at me and I whisper back.
"Magic."