

MEG POKRASS

Because He's Terribly Light and Small

Joshua and I are standing in the apple area, sniffing before picking which ones to buy. This is our Saturday night routine, gets us out of the house and social. Once a regular type of grocery store, now an organic national chain.

A young woman with corkscrew curls offers samples of acai berry spread, smiles at us and closes her lips. Her t-shirt says "acai pie". Joshua stares at her, the aisles going by too slow. I'm walking as quickly as possible without hitting shopping carts. "I'm so cold," he tells the bright containers. "Yay," he says. Nine years ago, I skied in the Sierra Nevadas -- four months pregnant. They couldn't stop me. I loved to be cold then too.

Three massage chairs near the bathrooms where quarter elephant and car rides used to be. Lavender soap and towelettes for customers. Down the "Healthy and New!" aisle, Joshua points to organic mango/mint/cocoa bean energy bars, crispy chips made from soy beans and green tea powder. "Pretty," he says. Because he's terribly light and small I pick him up and put him in the cart. When life gives you lemons. He laughs maniacally, and I smile at his happy face. I do not look around. The word "antioxidant" is displayed everywhere you look in here, like mouse ears at the Disneyland Hotel.

He points to the vegetable area, ruby grapefruit piled up to a peak. Joshua gets caught in patterns sometimes and his eyes play dead.

Later, I'll open a bag of cardamom mint chips and eat them one at a time sitting in the rocking chair, waiting for his breathing to even and release. Flecks of flavor come out like stars when I suck them slowly -- a minute or two between.