

MOTHERS
DAYS 15TH
JULY 2019

Lenka Clayton

Mothers' Days

Monday, 15th July 2019

The 15th of July 2019—was the day the roadworks outside the house began, was the day the baby was due, was the day of six vomits, was the day she drove home in socks, was the day her father went into a coma, was the day the big leaf on the houseplant unfurled, was the day the residency began, was the day she was stung by a bee, was the day she finally saw the ferry come in, was the day the chickens got out, was the day of the TV audition, was the day of the meeting with the divorce lawyer, was the day the letter from the police arrived, was the day his tooth fell out, was the day she found out she got the grant, was the day she suddenly realized her baby was now a toddler—was a normal Monday.

Simultaneously, over the course of the same 24 hours, 81 women in 19 countries—all artists and mothers to children from six weeks to 33 years old—recorded the details of their days.

Lenka Clayton

- 00:00 Breastfeed my daughter and fall asleep.
- 08:35 Wake up, go to pee and return to bed to breastfeed S.
- 09:12 Get up, go to the kitchen to wash dishes.
- 10:15 Hang out in the living room with S. and O.
- 10:45 Breastfeed S., prepare to leave.
- 11:03 Leave home and cycle to the studio.
- 13:00 Cycle back home. Grocery shopping on the way.
- 13:40 Reach home, lay down to breastfeed S.
- 14:15 Fold some clothes while S. plays with modeling clay.
- 14:46 Attempt to draw with wax crayons while breastfeeding in the living room.
- 14:50 We lay down to nurse but S. doesn't fall asleep.
- 15:10 Get up, wrap S. in the carrier.
- 15:55 Fold away some more clothes.
- 16:45 Go out to the local playground. Tired. I sit on a bench and cry.
- 17:10 Ask O. to throw me toilet paper from the kitchen window, take the stroller and go for a ride.
- 17:25 Reach the supermarket, get 1 liter of rice milk and a Moomin activity book for S.
- 17:45 Reach the big playground.
- 17:50 My friend comes with her daughter. We sit and talk and the girls play in the sandbox.
- 18:50 Start to move towards home. Girls share the stroller.

- 19:30 Reach home. S. wants some rice.
 20:00 Sit down to eat.
 20:10 S. draws on the kitchen table.
 20:28 Finish hanging laundry.
 20:46 Go to bathe and brush teeth while in the water.
 21:30 Turn off the light.
 22:00 S. falls asleep while nursing. I get up to drink some tea and work on the computer.
 22:15 S. wakes up, I take her to pee. We lay down to breastfeed.
 22:50 S. is asleep again. I get up and continue writing.
 23:55 Drink the remains of my cold rooibos tea.

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00:15. Finally going to sleep.

6:40. It's very windy and I'm feeling coldish. I have to pee again. My belly is itching. I cannot scratch, I might get stretch marks. I'm nervous. I hug my boyfriend from behind and he is happy and leans his weight on me. I have to be careful, he might squeeze my big belly and the baby inside. I have to find a middle point to hold them both. Baby kicks. I'm hungry already. But I'm so tired. I fall asleep.

8:00. The alarm rings. A disturbing dream. I was in a cultural center / shopping mall and I saw in a room my curator colleagues. I know I need to say hello and apologize because last time I went to Mexico I didn't

say, "Hello." I need to explain myself somehow. I hold my baby and go to them, I act normal but hope that they realize that I am mother now; this shall imply that I was overwhelmed and that's why I didn't call last time. They just look at me with zero interest, and say they'll come later. They leave me there alone with other friends of theirs that look at me with pity. Later in the dream my mother tells me that she's worried about my precarious situation. I'm angry and try to explain but inside I'm very afraid she might be right. I go to a hospital and a grown-up hand pushes from inside my belly. People come but they just stand around and observe me and talk amongst themselves as if I couldn't hear. I wake up; I feel scared and depressed. I go and make breakfast for my partner and I. I almost cannot eat.

9:08. My phone reminds me that my baby is now the size of a "Florida Pomelo."

9:45. Put the washing machine to work. White laundry has been waiting too long.

10:30. I been reading about vaginal changes during and after pregnancy. I have the feeling of hope and at the same time a big question mark. I'm so tired. I need a siesta. While lying on my left side the baby pushes up my... whatever is there. It hurts and I almost cannot breathe.

12:45. I wake up. Again I slept too long. I put food in the oven and hang the laundry.

13:10. A. is here, we eat together and then cuddle for ten minutes in the bedroom.

14:25. I get a message from O., tonight I might have an answer if I can do the residency in Madrid or not. I don't believe anything anymore. I'm sitting in front of the computer. I really need to write this application for an atelier and exhibition. It is already on paper but I feel so weak... I cannot concentrate at all.

14:35. I go to the shop to get a Coke.

15:00. I'm eating my ice cream and I'm ready to start writing my application. My feelings shift between thinking that I would be amazing and thinking that I might not convince those people to grant me that atelier because I'll be having a baby. I'm also afraid of not being able to actually do it. I try to keep concentrated and focus on my writing.

17:30. Application letter is ready, now I have to make sure all the other papers (CV, portfolio) are supporting the idea that I am the right one.

17:50. A. is home, we have nothing to eat. I'm full and nervous. I play with my belly a bit. Baby is kicking.

18:00. I ask A. to read my cover letter. I realize I have to change my portfolio, but the computer does not allow me to. I'm very angry, A. says that it might be possible on his working computer. I want him to go back to the office and get it but he doesn't offer it and I don't want

to ask. I ask friends in WhatsApp. No answer. I have to do it online. It is not easy.

18:45. A. realizes that we don't have gas. We cannot cook.

19:00. A. is reading my cover letter.

19:30. We make corrections together.

20:00. It's ready. I'm sending the e-mail. I hope it is going to work. I shouldn't be so negative. I am just so insecure sometimes. Somehow I see too small all the good things happening in my career and too big all the things I don't get done.

21:00. Small Italian restaurant. We're trying fish-couscous for the first time. It's delicious.

22:00. Walk around the little harbor. We have a short talk about the future. I want him to be patient and that we keep communicating about what make us feel comfortable or not. A. agrees, we have so much to learn. None of us know how to be parents.

23:00. We're home. Get ready to go to bed.

23:30. We're watching videos of products that we will apparently need for the baby. They're so expensive, but they look sweet. Silence, laughter, kisses.

23:45. Time to sleep. I rub my belly and feel how the wait is getting shorter and I don't think that I know more of anything.

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5:41 am: Wake up. See clock. Go back to sleep.

6:15 am: Wake up to alarm. Shut it off quickly so it doesn't wake anyone else. Get up.

6:19 am: Make coffee and take birth control.

6:23 am: Check email for writing prompt from a pop-up online writing community. It's not there yet, so I just free write.

6:40 am: Check again for the prompt, which hasn't arrived. Pause the writing and pick up "Harry Potter," which I'm re-reading for the hundredth time.

7:02 am: Check for the prompt. It's there, but I don't have time to follow it now, so I plan for later and read a bit more.

7:12 am: Make breakfast for 6-year-old son.

7:20 am: Wake up my son and rejoice that the bed is dry. Coax son into eating breakfast.

7:24 am: Dry brush my son's skin in a mid-breakfast break to help him wake up, as recommended by his occupational therapist.

7:27 am: Pack son's lunch and snack, while he finishes breakfast.

7:31 am: Send son to bedroom to snuggle with my husband who is still waking up and will help son brush teeth, while I finish packing lunch.

7:36 am: Check camp supply list against son's backpack and add missing items.

7:42 am: Update weekly dry erase calendar in kitchen.

7:44 am: Pep talk with husband and son to help son get ready for day.

7:48 am: Begin encouraging son to get dressed, while I take shower. Usually, I brush my teeth first, but I can't today because husband is still washing his face at the sink. As I exit the shower, he finishes with the sink, and I brush my teeth. He asks, "Should I close the door?" I laugh and say, "What's the point?"

7:55 am: Get dressed while continuing to coax son to do the same.

8:00 am: Wash son's chewing necklace, and gather my own various necessary objects (wallet, keys, phone, etc).

8:05 am: Drink coffee while son finishes getting dressed. Begin convincing him to put on shoes.

8:15 am: Put sunscreen on my son's face, and write a note for his lunch while he reads some seek-and-find books.

8:18 am: Drink coffee while son reads.

8:20 am: Suggest my son uses the bathroom, which is refused.

8:22 am: Turn off lights and fans, adjust AC and grab packed lunch and snack from the fridge.

8:26 am: Try to help son find last thing he's looking for in seek-and-find so we can leave. He's the one who finds it. Gather up backpack, sunglasses, hat, etc.

8:30 am: Leave apartment and walk to OT camp. Monitor traffic, help carry lunch, and discuss friends, birds, dogs (real and hallucinated), and video games along the way.

8:50 am: Arrive at camp, and settle into waiting room with coffee (me) and book (son).

9:01 am: Leave camp drop-off and head to coffee shop to meet sponsee.

9:09 am: Notice how this documentation is impacting my thinking. As I walk I think, "Smells something gross, sees discarded broom, walks past woman in sunflower dress."

9:12 am: Arrive at coffee shop.

9:45 am: Leave coffee shop for home to work.

9:50 am: Run into neighbor and discuss possible kiddo play date.

9:51 am: Arrive home and set up work space.

10:00 am: Lead weekly online video-meeting with team of arts administration co-op.

10:11 am: End meeting, pack up, and walk to office space.

10:49 am: Arrive at office space and begin work; emails, meetings, training, payroll configuration, contract update plan, etc.

12:02 pm: Meditate for 5 minutes with a few like-minded colleagues, then back to the admin work.

2:13 pm: Leave work (late) to pick up son from camp and grab a sandwich on the way.

2:58 pm: Arrive at camp pickup.

3:07 pm: Leave camp and take son to therapy. Arrive at therapy and immediately turn around to take son to restroom. Then back to therapy waiting room.

3:22 pm: Chat with son's neuropsych in waiting room.

3:29 pm: Chat with son's therapist as she walks him back for session. Check Slack and work email. Regret forgetting my book again. Email leads for childcare.

4:02 pm: Help my son with another bathroom trip. Back to waiting room and email.

4:15 pm: Walk home with son.

4:39 pm: Arrive home and coach son through putting his stuff away while I check in on more admin work.

5:09 pm: Prepare dinner for my son, interrupted periodically to look at a book with him, help him find other books he's looking for, fix a calendar error for work, and eat some cheese and olives that may or may not constitute my own dinner.

5:30 pm: Burn my arm while draining pasta and hold an old teething pack on it while getting pasta to the table for my son.

5:36 pm: Turn on some music and pack extra pasta into son's lunch for tomorrow.

5:45 pm: Send email to writing partners from the pop-up community.

5:49 pm: Sit and drink a seltzer, reading "Harry Potter," while my son reads Seek-and-Finds.

5:57 pm: Get text from husband that the subway is stuck outside the station, so he's running late. Write a check for the therapist, and help my son look for a toy he can't find. (We find it.)

6:25 pm: Kiss husband as he arrives home and I leave for an A.A. meeting.

6:38 pm: Arrive at A.A. meeting, grab some mediocre coffee and a seat before the 6:45 start.

7:50 pm: Walk and talk with friend.

8:55 pm: Arrive back home and check in with husband who is finishing a slice of pizza before heading into son's bedroom to finish his falling asleep routine.

8:58 pm: Call sponsor.

9:03 pm: Eat a slice of pizza and check email on my phone.

9:05 pm: Watch "So You Think You Can Dance?"

9:19 pm: Hear my son coughing from his room and worry that a) he's not yet asleep and b) he's having breathing issues.

9:20 pm: Wish I had ice cream in the freezer and settle for a pack of organic gummies.

9:22 pm: Wonder if my husband also fell asleep in our son's room, or if it's just another long, slow bedtime.

9:29 pm: Tidy up living room during commercials.

9:38 pm: Feel pretty sure that my husband fell asleep helping our son to sleep.

9:40 pm: Listen at the door, hoping the little one is asleep.

9:44 pm: Microwave popcorn and eat it.

9:48 pm: Exchange texts with babysitter about future availability.

9:53 pm: Husband emerges from bedroom and confirms son is finally asleep. We chat briefly and then I go back to my show, and he picks up his iPad.

10:00 pm: Turn off TV and chat with husband. We try out some touch exercises, and I ask him if he wants to read my day. He does.

10:34 pm: Change into pajamas. Read more "Harry Potter."

11:00 pm: Brush teeth.

11:04 pm: Say goodnight to husband.

11:07 pm: Move fan back into my son's room that we forgot to move earlier. Adjust AC. Put on a breathing nose-strip. Set alarm for 6:15 am.

11:11 pm: Take a moment of quiet gratitude for this day. Go to sleep.

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Midnight–6:30AM: Nurse baby off and on throughout night, trying to switch sides when I'm not too tired.

About 6:30: Husband comes in room to get socks and grumbles because I put all his clothes away. He'd rather have them in a messy pile in the laundry basket in the room he sleeps in because he can somehow find them better that way. Baby wakes up and reaches for daddy.

He kisses her. I get up, take baby to bathroom with me. She stays put on her toilet while I pee. I wash my hands and get her and change her diaper. We go to play area in living room while daddy makes breakfast.

7:00: I go to get laundry after asking husband about it and he grumbles more. I ask if he's in a bad mood and he doesn't answer so that confirms it. Bring laundry in to play mat so I can fold while watching baby. She crawls over immediately to help me sort laundry. I thank her for pulling things out while I fold. I start to put things away and she wants to follow me so then I take her hands to walk back to the play mat. Husband and I have argument about what I'll do when my unemployment runs out. He wants me to make more money so we can move and I tell him that I will be teaching like I had told him before but that I'm trying to take care of our child right now. He is concerned about a timeline and turning 50 in 10 years and I'll almost be 50 in 10 years and won't be marketable. I say I'm not concerned about being marketable because the baby is my top priority. I say that he wants to only value things that have a dollar value but some things don't have a dollar value like the life of a baby. I go to the bathroom and rinse my face because I was crying and come back and nurse baby on couch. She looks at me and I smile and tell her it's ok.

7:45ish: I do some online banking and check my unemployment funds but it's empty and I'm not sure why. We sit to eat breakfast with baby. I immediately

smell poop. We both get up to change her and give her a quick sink bath (she barely fits in now).

8:00: Husband plays with baby while I finish eating and I say I'd like to shower. He thinks she's tired already and takes her to the bedroom. I shower. When I get out they have gone on a walk.

8:07: Look at time and debate whether or not to do dishes or some yoga stretches while they're gone. I feed cat and then go do yoga stretches. My mind mills over the argument we had. I don't know how I'll make enough money for my half of expenses once I'm teaching and not on unemployment. My savings are holding me afloat right now and due to run dry in 2 months. I need to sell things. I notice a book under the bed while in downward dog pose. It's probably "Goodnight Moon."

8:20ish: They're back. I quickly finish and roll up mat. Add more hot coffee to mug and take baby to bedroom for nurse nap.

8:30: Baby's eyes start to close. I realize song "Bananaphone" has been on repeat in my head for last 2 days.

8:40: Baby did not fall asleep and is fussing. I give her teething oil. She doesn't want to nurse other side. We get up and walk dad out to say goodbye. I ask him to please take diaper trash out and to get my bike down.

8:50: Neighbor with baby same age texts me but I respond we're gonna try nurse nap again. Baby starts to close eyes and sleep this time. Mom texts and wants to come by. We discuss timing. I respond to a couple of texts from last night. Pull out art project from beneath bed cover and record day up until now.

9:30: Work on art project while baby sleeps on me.

9:40: Baby awake. Neighbor and baby daughter come over to play for 15–20 minutes. I bring down basket of baby musical instruments. Neighbor and I discuss the argument I had with partner. She suggests couples therapy.

10:20: Mom, stepdad, and stepbrother come over. Stepdad and stepbrother leave after a few minutes to run errands. I do dishes while mom watches baby and reads to her. Mom suggests outing to park. We get ready and go.

11:00: Park is crowded. There is some group of parents and kids. It's a Continuing Ed. parenting class. I take baby on slide. Then she plays in sand until baby swing opens up. She loves the swing and laughs and squeals while I push her. Try to talk to group leader for more info but she's busy. Stepdad and stepbrother come to pick up my mom. Baby not interested in nursing. We walk for a couple minutes then leave.

11:40: Baby doesn't want to go. I tell her we're going home for lunch and give her toy for car ride.

12:15PM: Daddy joins us for lunch and briefly says hi to baby. She's getting tired. I try to nurse nap her 2 sides but she is fighting nap.

1:30: Baby finally nursing to sleep.

1:30–3:20: Read articles online while baby sleeps on me. Finish cloth diaper sketch art. Send a few emails. Look at California Arts Council artist calls and take notes.

3:20: Baby wakes. We go to bathroom and then I do dishes while she plays with a bowl of water I put on the kitchen tiles. We eat a peach. Try to nurse her but she's not interested. We bike to the local bike store so I can order a double kickstand. We see friends on the way.

4:20: Arrive home. Try to nurse her outside where it's cool but she's not interested. She just wants to play with the dried leaves I collected yesterday for her. I go to get a sparkling water from fridge except there aren't any so I take what's left of the rosé.

5:00: Baby finally nurses. Afterwards it's more play time, walk time, splashing water. She wants to take dirt out of my container garden so I dig up some compost for her to play with. She keeps wanting to walk by other neighbors' back patios along the shared patio space and fusses when I turn her around because it's so close to their windows.

5:30ish: Dad finally gets home. He plays with her and I do last of dishes and get dinner started. Then I take baby and he BBQ's sausage on our neighbor's grill. He finishes dinner while I engage her.

6:30ish: We eat with baby switching laps. She won't do high chair much anymore.

7:00ish: We go for walk to try to tire out baby since the last week or so she's been fighting bedtime. We hold her hands and let her walk a lot so she can use up her energy. Dad smokes a little from his joint.

7:30ish: We go to bedroom and I nurse her several times. She tries to crawl to edge of bed and get down by herself which she knows how to do. We try to keep her on bed and read a couple books. I nurse her again in side-lying position and she finally dozes off. Daddy is lying down behind me before he goes to other room to sleep. I turn and pull him closer and we spoon as he falls asleep. I almost forgot what it feels like to spoon with him. It feels so nice. I want to fall asleep like that but I remember we left the bicycle outside. I wait a little longer and then tell him I left it outside. He goes to get it. We kiss goodnight.

Baby awakens but won't nurse back to sleep as usual. I try to put teething oil on her gums but she cries. Daddy comes in and holds her. Nothing helps. She also sees the cat and cries because she wants to pet her. Finally I take her and rock her close to my breast in case she decides

to nurse which she does while I sing her song softly. She starts to doze off again and I lie down with her. We nurse off and on throughout the night.

Daddy closes windows throughout house as mockingbirds start chirping away. He also turns down the big fan.

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4:24am: Wake up; have to pee. Try to listen for L's breathing on way to bathroom. Return to bed, can't fall asleep; can't stop hearing P's breathing. Try to find earplugs; can't. Find a bandana instead and use it as a blindfold. Can't fall back asleep and worry if I don't I'll be irritable and less resilient to deal with the next day's challenges.

4:30am: Listen to L's coughing from other room and worry he needs his inhaler—forgot to give it to him before bed.

5:25am: Still awake thinking about (among other things like needing to find a new car) how a child is a consciousness coming into being and I, hopefully, am a consciousness coming into being. Bird chirping outside sounds like a machine.

6am: Fall back asleep.

7:35am: Wake up. Hear L say, "Daddy! Daddy!" I ponder disturbing dream of a man wearing a matching

loose beige linen shirt and pants—speaking in a warped, underwater voice. "I can't understand you... does your voice sound strange to you?" I ask. "Guggle, girgle, blabble, a lurdle maybe..." he says, in the dream. I remove the bandana from my eyes and get up.

8:00am: Make pancakes with blueberries for L and myself.

8:40am: Help L sort "Apples to Apples" card game.

8:50am: Wash dishes, clean kitchen.

10:30am: Have coffee, check email, review RSVP's for L's birthday party, research new and used cars for safety/reliability ratings.

11:15am: Take shower, put on sunscreen, brush teeth, braid hair.

11:35am: Make/pack lunches for L, P and myself.

12:02pm: L says, "I'm going to launch a missile, watch this!" "I can't, I'm making lunch," I respond.

12:30pm: L, P and I walk to beach.

12:40pm: Can't take my eyes off L as he plays catch with the waves at the shore; feeling a mix of delight and fear. "Come back," I yell from the picnic blanket, "It's time for lunch." P says, "he can't hear a thing."

12:58pm: Seven seagulls fly in V formation over us.

1:00pm: L wants to dig a moat: “Somebody help!” he says. “Ok,” I say, pushing myself.

1:15pm: L and I build a castle and part of a moat. L wants to wreck the sides of the castle with his hand and calls it: “Falling Kingdom.” I suggest we make a cake sometime and name it the same thing —intentionally wrecking one side of the cake and letting crumbs cascade down.

1:19pm: “Can you bury me? Can you bury me?!” L asks. “Sure,” I reply.

1:55pm: Walk on beach alone; P stays with L.

2:14pm: L and P dig a hole near the shore so deep I can barely see L’s head over the top. I try to relax in a small metal folding chair.

2:15pm: P picks up a single bird feather and lets it loose in the wind. We laugh as we watch it fly through the air—a one-winged, one-feathered bird.

2:19pm: I go back to the house to read for a while; too much wind. P stays with L on the beach.

3:15pm: L and P back at the house. Snack time; I put a blueberry muffin and a handful of grapes on a plate for L. He begs for gummy candy. “Just 2 pieces?” I tell him if he eats a carrot he can have 2; I immediately regret this bargain realizing how low I’ve stooped.

3:57pm: Set my alarm for ½ an hour. I am grateful P is willing to play Monopoly with L (2nd time today) and

that this rental house has a small backyard where I can go almost out of earshot of their voices. I read about Robert Irwin’s 70’s work for a class called Mind, Body, and Space. I try to take in every moment of being in the country (away from the city), staring through the brim of my straw hat, the holes appearing like small apertures framing bright blue circles of sky, trees blowing, jasmine blossoms. I think I’m hearing the ocean.

4:16pm: “Mommy,” L whisper-yells in my ear and I remove the brim of my hat from my eyes.

4:45–5:30pm: L, P and I walk on beach to only restaurant on the shore for dinner. Arrive to a sign: “Closed, Grill Broke.” L stomps and fake cries—hungry, tired, sand in eye, turning red. P gives L piggyback ride to snack stand near beach—thankfully still open. Order food. Pour water with a straw in L’s eye to clean out sand.

6:22pm: L wants to play “Cops ‘n’ Robbers” at the playground. I agree. Chase him uselessly as he’s much faster. Run for 5 minutes and stub my toe (sandals on wood chips). “T” I gesture with my hands using L’s language: “time out!” I limp to a bench.

6:25pm: All walk back to house.

7:04pm: Back at the house, find a book called “An Ocean Garden: The Secret Life of Seaweed.” L says: “Owwww!!!” He falls to the floor, toe stubbed on

sofa leg. Tears. I prepare an ice pack with ice cubes and zip lock bag. He's ok. I go back to the book.
 "Feather Boa Kelp... Turkish Towel... Surfgrass... Green Rope...." Wow.

7:15pm: I give L a five minute warning before his shower.

7:27pm: Get L in shower. L says: "Too cold! Too cold!" and "We have to shampoo even on vacation?"—"Yes." In the shower, L says about the water falling: "It sounds like missiles dropping, doesn't it?"

7:40pm: Dry L's hair and burn my pinky finger on hair dryer element. Use his ice pack.

7:46pm: L hurts knee trying to avoid bedtime. Cries. Uses ice pack again.

7:55pm: Try to read a book to L. "I want daddy to read!" and, "I'm hungry," says L. I get him a banana and insist he sit up to eat. "You can't eat backwards," I warn. "I will," he says, "in a minute."

8:25pm: Give L inhaler, floss and brush his teeth.

8:35pm: I say good night to L. I pat his back and pretend to burp him like when he was a baby. He fake burps and says: "Now I can burp myself." "Yes, you're old enough to burp yourself now," I reply. "Maybe if you're old..." he says, trailing off... "... you might need someone to burp you?" I finish his sentence. "Yeah, like if something was wrong with you," he adds. "Yeah."

Hear birds chirping outside, different types, speaking to each other.

8:40pm: L asleep. Fastest, possibly, I've seen him fall asleep.

9:20pm: P wants to watch "Arrested Development" on the laptop; I suggest "Monty Don's French Gardens." We settle on the latter even though P says he doesn't like it.

9:45pm: Notice the moon through the sheer blinds in the bedroom. "Look at the moon!" I say to P. P starts to play poker on his phone with Monty Don in the background. We're both tired.

10:27pm: Floss, brush, take shower, check on L, close window, find ear plugs, get into bed, hope I don't wake at 4am again.

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06:55 School term time alarm woke me even though it's the holidays. My son, A, is back from 6 nights away with my ex-partner, which is the longest time we've been apart and so I feel the need to get up and check he really is here; and he is, naked under a blanket with the duvet kicked to the floor. It's the hottest night we've had for years. I check emails.

07:25 Put a wash on.

07:30 Scold the cat as I try to order my thoughts for the day: plans for an installation in a disused telephone booth, taking my son swimming, applying for a job which closes at midnight.

07:31 Feed the cat.

08:12 My son wakes and runs into the kitchen, excited to be back at mum's house. It's our house, I tell him.

08:15 Make bagel toast for A's breakfast. I wait for the café to open for mine. My son calls me "Daddy" and realizing his mistake put his hands over his mouth and blushes. I reply to emails.

08:20 Look online at the toys to reward A for being brave in the pool later. He wants a bean bag in the shape of a Minecraft block of sandstone (£24.99) but is just as happy with a small Lego set.

08:57 Take out washing and put another on. There are still unwashed clothes at the bottom of A's rucksack. Flashback to being married and my husband returning from overseas with 60kg of laundry.

08:58 We both put our swimsuits on under our day clothes. I remember to pack underwear to put on after the swim.

09:00 I hang the washing on the line and leave my son alone in our top floor flat. The plan is always the same; if the doorbell rings or he wants me he has to bang on the window. The window stays dark and empty. I find

hanging laundry, as always, really satisfying when the breeze is strong and warm. I take longer than needed, enjoying the feeling of being alone but not alone.

10:01 We take a short cycle with our swimming kit in the front basket and A on a pillow strapped to the back. He asks for Elton John, "I'm Still Standing," on Spotify as we ride along the prom which he says is, nearly as cool as being in a real car. We arrive just as the café opens.

10:03 Coffee arrives to the table without me asking which is half the reason I want to be here. I just want someone to make my breakfast for me today and so we order juice, toast and jam. It all goes some way towards feeling like we're on holiday. There's so much pressure to be on holiday.

11:40 Head to the pool, listen to Queen, "We Will Rock You" on a low volume. My son sings the words behind me, pausing if we pass other people.

12:11 A collects swimming aids and toys and takes them to the shallow end and I sit on the side, reminding him that once I'm in the pool I need to keep moving so it's better if I stay dry while I watch him play. I time him holding his breath under water, 6 seconds is a new personal best. He asks me to watch him do an impression of swimming as he goes face down, googles on, front crawl for 6 seconds. To get the toy he has to try swimming without holding his breath with his face out

of the water so he can breathe, but he gets tearful about this. He says he can't move through the water with his face above the surface until he's 8, so we agree on a smaller reward for today's efforts.

12:45 I get in the pool and play for as long as I can.

12:56 We get out of the pool and A has his own shower cubicle which helps us both feel grown up and I only need to help a bit with shampooing his hair. He calls under the cubicle door to see if it's okay to have a secret wee down the plug. I say, no. I think he did one anyway but I'll never know for sure.

13:19 We sit down in another café to keep the holiday vibe going but A is desperate to get home and watch Minecraft tips on YouTube. I eat an overpriced risotto and A picks at his bread and I remember why I don't come to this café often.

14:00 Cycle home, remember half way about phone booth project.

14:10 Unlock the box, have forgotten tape measure but take some photos of the interior hidden behind the current display by a local photographer. A loves it, and is impressed I have my own key. We find some dead spiders.

15:43 After working on the laptop for a while I realize the job I'm applying for requires a driver's license though it's not clear why.

16:06 Notice it's raining, remember the second load of laundry is still in the machine.

16:11 Take two day's worth of skin, hair, and nail supplements then feed the cat.

16:27 Put a pizza in the oven.

16:30 Play three rounds of Snakes and Ladders with a backgammon doubling dice making it the quickest game ever.

16:51 Message from A's dad that A has nits and needs treatment. I check and there are a few dead and one live one on the comb. Apply lotion.

17:23 Hang the second load of laundry next to the first load that got caught in the rain and sit for a minute on the little bench in our communal garden. Think about going upstairs and getting a blanket to come down and lie on, maybe buy a beer from the corner shop. Find batteries for the portable radio.

17:29 My son is back on the computer, I check emails. Start to tidy up, everything.

19:04 I say, "It's bedtime." It's not for a while but I want to plant the seed. I finish tidying.

20:00 Agree on 10 minutes iPad, 2 games of Top Trumps (Dinosaurs) and one story book/10 pages of a fact book.

21:05 A and I tell each other our favorite and not favorite thing about the day. Mainly he hasn't wanted to walk anywhere and liked it best when we played cards.

21:20 I take a photo of the red sky.

21:34 I watch the laundry blowing about.

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4:08 am I move the fast asleep, arms up baby from the middle of our bed back into his sidecar bed so I can stretch out and have more space. I notice now our older boy 'A' is also in our bed, he must have crept in sometime after 11:30pm when we went to bed (2 am he admitted later). I'm too tired to kick him out so I roll over and fall back asleep.

4:15 am Baby is now energetically flapping his arms and kicking his legs loudly in his bed, so I pull him back into bed with me.

Around 5:00 am Husband gets up to get ready for work, but I'm half-asleep and it doesn't really register.

6:30 am I nurse baby lying on my left side and we fall back asleep.

7:30 am I nurse baby lying down on the other side, afterwards he is flapping arms and legs again. I sit up and try to burp him and nothing happens, so I lay down again and put him on my chest. He immediately relaxes

into rag doll mode. I close my eyes to rest a few more minutes. 'A' asks to hold the baby, "Shhhhh" I say.

7:40 am 'A' goes downstairs to look for Papa who I know has already left for work, 'A' comes back to bed and tells me so.

8:00 am 'A' asks again to hold the baby. I relent, roll the baby off my chest and back down into the middle of the bed. I roll over to try to rest just a few more minutes. But actually I need to pee.

8:02 am I go downstairs, my father-in-law enters the hall just as I reach the downstairs toilet, he says, "Good morning." I can barely mutter hello, not being a morning person, but I'm grateful at least it's not my cheery, inquisitive mother-in-law.

8:05 am I return to our room, the brothers are playing and talking in bed. I raise the window blind and open the window. I go back to my iPod notes to re-write my early morning entries and make them coherent. 'A' asks what I'm doing, I explain and now he wants to know what I'm writing as I write it.

8:50 am I read my entries to 'A' (omitting the part about my MIL, his Oma/grandmother). "Thank you," he says and kisses me. I change the baby's nighttime pampers and get him dressed. 'A' goes upstairs to his room to get dressed and then downstairs to eat and probably watch tv.

9:03 am I put baby in his sidecar bed while I make our bed. Then I put baby back in our bed with a soft, cloth monster shaped rattle and get myself dressed as he examines it closely.

9:09 am Baby loses interest in rattle and starts making “I’m hungry” breathy grunts. I sit on the edge of the bed and nurse the left side, my fast flow boob. He chokes and coughs a bit between noisy slurping and gulping, gets milk all over his cheek and chin. The chest and shoulder of his shirt are wet with milk too. I ask him if it’s good, he smiles a wide, gummy smile.

9:15 am I resume getting dressed and washing my face, baby chomps on his fingers.

9:21 am Baby fusses again, I try to burp him, nothing happens. I put him back down on the bed with a green plastic rattle ball that I suspect is also marketed elsewhere as a dog or cat toy. I plug my iPod in to charge and get the buckle carrier setup around my waist. I get the baby strapped into the carrier (facing me on the front) and go downstairs.

9:30 am ‘A’ is watching a reality show on tv; “Dating No Filter” (?!?) “Is that a show for kids??” I ask. “I don’t know,” he says (he knows). I tell him he can watch an animal documentary or something. He puts on Cartoon Network. I fix myself a plate of leftover salmon and zucchini for breakfast. In the carrier, the baby burps unassisted, twice. MIL comes into the living room and

says, “Hello,” while still buttoning her pants, she says she heard the baby crying last night.

9:33 am I forgot my vitamins and go back upstairs to get them and return to the kitchen. MIL asks when next baby checkup is. She is getting herself ready to go to the grocery store with her bike she tells me.

9:38 am I sit back down at the kitchen table to eat with baby in the carrier, MIL comes to stand behind me, peeks over my shoulder to look at and talk to baby. It starts to rain so MIL decides to wait to leave for the store. I get up, find and put the carseat on the kitchen table, unstrap the baby from the carrier and into the carseat. Now MIL can interact with the baby without hovering over me, which I find annoying. I finish eating.

9:50 am MIL leaves. I put baby back in the carrier, he is getting fussy and tired. I wash dishes. Baby falls asleep and I put the carrier hood up. I go to the pantry/utility room and take out the load of laundry I put in the washer last night.

10:05 am I carry the basket of wet laundry upstairs to hang to dry in the attic since it’s rainy outside. I first have to clear away the laundry from yesterday that was hanging to dry on the rack in the attic. I take yesterday’s laundry downstairs to our room. There is also another basket of laundry from yesterday, or the day before yesterday, in our room to be put away.

10:24 am I fold and put away the clothes from my husband, myself, 'A' and the baby. Because I enjoy cloth diaper prep, I save that for last. I prepare 9 cloth diapers: I adjust the snap up diaper rises, stuff pockets, snap in, fold in, lay in or tuck various combinations of inserts and liners. Baby is still sleeping in the carrier. 'A' is watching cartoons, eating crackers and frozen mango. MIL returns and goes to her room (which is right next to ours) to make phone calls. I can hear her excitedly talking through the walls, but can't make out exactly what she's saying.

10:40 am 'A' comes upstairs to ask what my favorite song is and tell me his new favorite; "The Earth." He hums a little of it for me. I agree to listen to it together with him after I finish with the laundry.

11:10 am I go downstairs and 'A' starts the video for "The Earth" on YouTube. I eat a banana and a nectarine as it plays. I'm not a fan of all the cursing.

11:15 am I turn off the TV and we go upstairs. I take the baby out of the carrier and hold him in my lap as I sit in bed propped up on pillows leaning against the wall. 'A' does his mandatory reading aloud of 10 pages in Dutch. I follow along and try to correct his pronunciation where I can, though it's difficult since I'm not a native-speaker. He reads from a library copy of one of the "Diary of a Loser" series. Baby stays sleeping, he smiles in his sleep a few times.

11:40 am His reading finished, 'A' goes downstairs to play Minecraft on MIL's iPad. I check my email on the computer and my Dragonvale Dragons on my iPad while baby sleeps.

11:42 am 'A' comes back upstairs for the iPad charger.

12:00 pm Husband calls from work and MIL brings me the phone. We talk about house stuff, what the kiddos are up to and our plans for the day.

12:15 pm I watch a cloth diaper review video on YouTube.

12:35 pm Baby wakes up. I start to change his diaper, but he gets upset so I stop halfway through the process and nurse him instead. Baby is calm and happy again, so I finish the diaper procedures and put him back in the carrier. I go downstairs and prepare the stroller (with bassinet) and my backpack to go out. I tell 'A' to put on long pants (since it's chilly), socks, shoes and jacket.

1:30 pm I put baby in the bassinet with two light blankets and a chain of six brightly colored, variously textured plastic rings. I take off the carrier, bunch it up and shove it into the too small basket underneath the bassinet along with a couple more toys: a soft cloth mobile and a "Sophie the Giraffe" squeaky toy (another toy I think could easily be re-marketed for dogs). Then I strap my stocked backpack (cloth diapers, spare clothes, changing pad, nursing cover, water bottle, etc.)

onto the stroller handlebar and we leave the house for the bus stop.

1:40 pm We arrive at the bus stop and are lucky that we only have to wait a few minutes til it comes. I give 'A' our bus passes to validate on the machine inside and I maneuver the stroller into the stroller/wheelchair spot by the back doors. 'A' talks to me about red stone, sticky pistons and levers in Minecraft.

1:57 pm Arrive at the library, 'A' returns his book via the fun touchscreen and automated conveyer belt system they have. We leave for a lunch spot.

2:15 pm We order (overpriced) burritos, chips and guacamole to go at a place across from the library. Then we walk to a tram stop and take it 2 stops down the street. Baby is starting to get fussy in the stroller, 'A' and I take turns holding him.

2:35 pm We stop into an apartment complex courtyard that has a pop-up outdoor cafe. I nurse baby at a table while 'A' eats his burrito. Then I wolf down mine while 'A' holds baby, he doesn't want to be in the stroller AT ALL anymore.

3:00 pm We walk around the corner to go to my kine appointment. In the waiting room I change baby's diaper and nurse him again. He falls asleep and luckily sleeps through my exam as I hold him in my arms. 'A' eats nachos and guacamole in another exam room and

is bored, he tells me later. But still he saves half the chips and guacamole for me.

4:00 pm We walk from the kine's office back to the library with baby in the carrier. 'A' pushes the stroller.

4:45 pm After perusing the shelves in the kids' section for a while, 'A' checks out a "Minecraft Hacks" book at the library and we walk back to the burrito place.

4:50 pm We order another (overpriced) burrito for my husband since he would probably be jealous that we had burritos for lunch and he didn't. We walk to the bus stop to get home and again we are lucky that the bus comes after only a few minutes. Baby is awake but relaxed in the carrier so I continue to just use the stroller to carry my backpack. On the bus, baby sucks on the carrier straps and looks around. 'A' flips through his Minecraft book.

5:15 pm We arrive at our home stop, cross the street to the bakery and buy a baguette and 2 soft rolls. 'A' eats one roll right away and gives himself a beard and mustache of white flour and crumbs. I walk home with baby and stroller as 'A' runs the last block home.

5:30 pm Baby and I arrive home, the front door is open. MIL's bike is unlocked and on its kickstand by the door. I take my backpack, the remaining baked goods and the library book from out of the bassinet and put them on the kitchen table. Inside I ask 'A' to take the burrito

and toys out of the bottom of the stroller. I disengage and bring the bassinet inside. Then I take baby out of the carrier and ask 'A' to hold him while I collapse the stroller bottom and shove it under the stairs. MIL stands in the living room watching the Tour de France on TV. She is about to leave for her doctor's appointment, she says, but another Belgian is winning a stage!

5:40 pm Husband arrives home, sits down to watch the end of the Tour and the interviews. I hand him the baby to hold, they play and talk/coo as he watches. FIL arrives and bends down to chat with baby also, blocking the TV in the process, 'A' complains. Baby is making lots of happy screeching noises, smiling, blowing bubbles and drooling. The front of his shirt is getting wet. Husband then hands baby back to me and goes to eat his burrito, I nurse the baby. Baby smiles at me and makes a long, drawn-out fart. We both laugh.

6:00 pm I give baby back to husband to go eat my half of the leftover nachos and guacamole. 'A' comes over to beg a couple from me, I give him a few and let him have the crumbs.

6:15 pm MIL returns, she, FIL, Husband and 'A' are talking to and playing with baby in the living room. I make myself a plate and eat alone at the kitchen table, more leftover salmon, some cucumber and beets.

6:20 pm Husband, MIL and FIL leave to go look at the new house and see the progress FIL has made tiling.

'A' eats some plain brown bread watching a home renovation show on tv, he doesn't want fish. I'm letting this one go. I finish eating my dinner one handed holding baby in my lap.

6:37 pm I take baby upstairs to change his diaper. (There's an Amazon package for me at top of the stairs, it must have come while we were out.) Baby cacas on the changing table mat the moment before I am about to put a fresh diaper under him. But it's fine, I have plenty of clean changing table cloths. Freshly changed, I give baby his green plastic rattle ball/cat or dog toy and lay him on the bed. I lay out our pj's, his nighttime diaper, lotion and towel. I close the window and the blind and turn on a soft light. Then I open the Amazon box; more cloth diapers.

6:50 pm Baby loses interest in the rattle ball and is fussy, I nurse him. I hear Husband, MIL and FIL return. I take baby back downstairs along with a fresh wet-bag and a stuffed diaper for the backpack so that it is stocked for tomorrow's day out.

7:00 pm I talk house stuff with Husband downstairs. 'A' does composition writing practice. Baby is getting fussy in my lap and won't nurse, he's getting tired and screechy, I put him in the carrier and go back upstairs.

7:20 pm I run baby's bath, sing some songs to him, undress and bathe him, massage in some lotion, put him in his nighttime diaper and pj's, turn on the fan for white

noise, close the door, lay down with him, nurse him to sleep and plug in his pacifier.

7:48 pm Baby is asleep.

7:52 pm Husband comes upstairs to take his shower, I inch away from baby in bed and go empty and put away the baby bathtub. I put my pj's, towel and shower stuff in the bathroom in preparation for my own evening shower later. I put the dirty diaper service diapers outside by the front door, ready to be picked up tomorrow morning. I start doing my kine exercises. Husband finishes shower and wants to talk house stuff with me and FIL downstairs. Husband WAKES THE BABY trying to rig his iPod and my iPad into a video baby monitor with FaceTime and some propped up pillows. I put baby in the carrier and go downstairs, annoyed. I tell 'A' to brush his teeth, he's watching tv with MIL. He wants to eat an apple first.

8:30 pm I come back upstairs, take baby out of the carrier, lay down and nurse him to sleep again. He makes some long farts.

8:37 pm Baby is asleep again. I resume my kine exercises.

8:48 pm 'A' comes in to get his toothbrush and toothpaste and almost WAKES THE BABY, but I spring up from doing my floor exercises and hold baby's pacifier in place while I rest an open palm hand on his chest to try and keep him in his sleep zone. It works.

8:57 pm Husband comes in after putting 'A' to bed, and stays with baby while I take a shower and get dressed for bed.

9:15 pm I go downstairs to bring myself up a snack of cheese and an apple. I check my email, FB and IG messages, arrange a play date for tomorrow afternoon and watch an episode of original series "Star Trek" on Netflix. Husband watches a post Tour de France talk show program downstairs with his parents.

11:15 pm I turn off and unplug the computer. I scootch the baby gently into his bed. I place his pacifier above his head, within easy reach should I need it. I get cozy under a light blanket and close my eyes to sleep. I don't hear when husband comes up to bed.

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6:30am Wake up, check the time and realize L is still asleep, close my eyes and doze for a few minutes.

6:50am L is awake and calling "Mama, mama!" so I get up, eyes half open. Get L out of his cot and we sit on his bedroom floor. L starts climbing on me and I realize he has done a poo. I change his nappy and then sit back down for a minute. He starts asking for porridge so we go downstairs.

7:20am I boil the kettle, put L's porridge on and make a cup of tea. L alternates between playing with toys and

trying to open cupboards and the dishwasher and turn the washing machine on.

7.55am The porridge is ready, it is hot and L is impatient to eat it. He starts emptying the drawer next to his high chair and finds a pencil and some post it notes. He does some drawing then finds some keys and starts playing with the key rings whilst he finishes eating his breakfast.

8.20am I make my breakfast. L starts emptying tins from a cupboard then comes and asks for a “bit” of my breakfast. L tells me he’s done a poo so we go upstairs to change his nappy and both get dressed.

8.55am R gets up to say goodbye and helps get L ready to leave the house.

9.05am We leave the house and walk to the station.

9.15am We get on the train, L is very excited. We go to Forest School on a Monday morning. It’s not that far away but the journey is awkward as we have to get three or four trains. I have the rhyme from L’s train book cycling round in my head. Although I am finding it easier each week, this journey makes me anxious and there’re lots of changes and lifts to negotiate.

10.20am Get off the final train and walk to the nature reserve where Forest School happens.

10.30am Arrive at the nature reserve. The first thing L wants to do is go to the pond. The pond dipping equipment is already set up and he scoops out a tomato. He flits between participating in the activities and wandering around doing his own thing. We see a stag

beetle and look under some more rocks and logs, L chases a cat and then spends a while looking for it and collecting it some plums he’s found on the floor. He shares his snacks with another girl a similar age at story time, this makes me really happy.

12.00pm Leave Forest School and walk to the station via the shops to buy L some milk and me some scones for lunch.

12.15pm Get on the first train to go home. L has his milk and is sleepy. I check my emails and write some of this on the train home. L falls asleep on the second train. I spend the rest of the journey writing this and replying to messages on my phone.

1.10pm Get off the train and walk home, make a cup of tea, eat scones, open post. I panic that L has been asleep for an hour already and will wake up before I’ve had time to do anything.

1.45pm Clean and put away the equipment from the photography workshop I ran last week that’s been sitting in the dining room. Sort some washing to put on when L wakes up. Make a list of things to do this week. Do some research into some photography chemicals I need. Start sorting and packaging prints for the event I’m exhibiting at, at the weekend. Make a video of me packing prints and take some photos to put on Instagram later. I feel more relaxed.

3.15pm L wakes up. We have a chat, I make him some snacks and put the washing on. L asks to watch TV.

3.30pm We watch TV, L wants to watch “Bing”—he

thinks it's hilarious. I do some reading and draft Instagram posts.

4.30pm I switch the TV off and we read "Meg and Mog" then do some drawing. We draw snails and galaxies.

5.00pm I decide to make some cake before dinner. L wants banana cake (we made it last week), we have no bananas so make apple muffins. L helps with putting the paper cases in the tin then watches intently as I weigh the ingredients. The muffins have raisins and yogurt in so L wants some. He eats raisins and yogurt while I finish making the muffins. I take the washing out of the machine and leave it in a heap.

6.00pm I start making dinner—aubergine and mozzarella pasta. The muffins are cooling on the kitchen table. L keeps going to check them to see if they're still hot. The aubergine is cooking when L tells me he's done a poo. I turn the dinner off and we go upstairs and change his nappy. He takes the lid off the Sudocrem and puts it all over his legs while I'm trying to clean the poo, I feel annoyed. We go back to the kitchen and I carry on cooking. L tries to hang some of the washing up then plays with toys periodically checking on the muffins.

6.45pm We eat dinner. L goes through his plate picking out all the bits he likes and leaving the rest. We have a muffin each for pudding.

7.15pm We go upstairs to get L ready for bed. He runs away from me as I try to change his nappy and put his pajamas on—he thinks this is funny, I am too tired to

battle with him. Eventually he is changed and we read stories whilst he drinks his milk.

8.00pm I put L in bed. I hide in our bedroom calling out goodnight every time he calls out, "Mama!" while I noodle around on the Internet on my phone. He gets his foot stuck in the bars of his cot and starts crying. I go to help him and give him a hug; he is unsettled. 8.45pm L is laying in bed chatting to himself. I love listening to this.

9.00pm I think L is asleep. Then I hear him speak. I creep downstairs. Message R to find out if he's left work. He's on the way home. I clear up the kitchen and find the pile of washing I'd left earlier.

9.30pm R arrives home, he finishes clearing up while I sit down. I am exhausted.

10.00pm R eats his dinner as we watch "Stranger Things." We watch two episodes instead of being sensible and going to bed after one. My brain has a rest.

11.40pm Get into bed, fall straight to sleep.

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Just before midnight H wakes up. As we share a bed, he pulls at my shirt like a nursing request and I say we're going back to sleep without nursing. He asks for water. We had a big day at the beach and I forgot to put water next to the bed so I get up to fill an empty cup in the bathroom. I want to pee but I know the sound will wake him more so I skip it. I turn the fan on low because the

room is warm with stagnant air. H takes a sip of water, then lies down and says, “cuddle.” I put my arm around him until we’re both back to sleep.

Approx. 5:30 a.m. H stirs before sunrise and wants to nurse. I consider asking him to wait, but decide to nurse on the chance we can both get more sleep. I try to nod off but my arm has fallen asleep and I’m not comfortable. H falls back asleep at 6:30 a.m. and I can turn my body at last.

6:40 a.m. H sleeps about 10 mins without a nipple in his mouth. He wakes and asks to nurse and, anticipating what I might say (though I was not going to say it), acknowledges he “just nursed” not long ago. I say, “Let’s get out of bed.” “We can nurse downstairs,” he proposes (this is a new idea). We get up, use the bathroom, change his diaper without much fuss. I have a few things I want to do upstairs but H is eager to go downstairs and nurse. We go, nurse, read. Then he asks for pasta for breakfast. I make pasta. I seldom do this, and usually begrudgingly, but this morning workers are arriving to fix our leaky ceiling and I want to keep things easy.

7:50 a.m. H is finishing breakfast when he asks for apple cider. We don’t have any. “Let’s go to the store now and get it,” he suggests/pleads. I say no. A few tears. “The store’s not open,” he justifies. “Well, that’s true,” I say. “It’s not open yet. (It opens at 8.) But we’re not going to the store now anyway.” He asks to nurse. We nurse on sofa. We read.

8:10 a.m. We get dressed. M, my spouse, dresses H and I manage to brush my teeth and use the bathroom alone. I move some things out of the closet in preparation for demo beginning today. Three workers arrive. M reads with H. I make potato salad and tea and eat breakfast. I prepare H’s lunch, fold clean sheets and towels, and put H’s clothes in the wash.

9 a.m. Nanny HR arrives. H wants to cuddle on sofa with me—this means nurse. We nurse, then he wants me to join him to play a newish game on the mat. I sit near him while he takes his vehicles out of their storage bin one by one, driving them “up and down” the bin, and then puts them back one by one. He likes me to say “up” with him.

9:25 a.m. I manage to break away to talk to M and grab some library books upstairs for H and HR to return. H comes upstairs and carries the books down, signaling that he’s ready to leave. It’s nearly 9:40 and I tell M I’m feeling frustrated with spending so much transition time with H after HR arrives. I want to start working.

9:40 a.m. H and HR leave. M leaves. I check on the workers, eat more potato salad, and start up my computer.

10:00 a.m. I’m finally at my desk, which, today, is the dining table.

10:07 a.m. Sitting at my laptop, glancing at an article about Edward Burzynsky from a December 2016 issue of “The New Yorker” M just found.

10:20 a.m. Talk to a worker about paint.

10:25 a.m. Proofread for 30 mins.

11:00 a.m. Call our census taker to complete our monthly survey. We got randomly selected to be part of the Current Population Survey so we answer questions about employment every month. Reminds me I am looking for better work.

11:20 a.m. Read about the U.S. women’s soccer team’s fight for equal pay.

11:28 a.m. Log my work time.

11:30 a.m. Start reading about Trump’s racist comments to four Democratic Representatives of color.

12:00 p.m. Bathroom break. A worker starts working in the kitchen, right next to the dining table where I’ve set up. I didn’t know the guys would be painting here.

12:08 p.m. Put H’s laundry in dryer. I was planning to work away from the house this afternoon once H and HR returned but M wants me to stay home since there are workers in the house. I can’t cook or make lunch or do dishes because the refrigerator is now in the center of the kitchen and plastic sheets are being taped all over the kitchen. I eat H’s leftover cheddar stick and bread

from breakfast. I’m not too hungry since I snacked on potato salad all morning.

12:35 p.m. Move to lower room, which is storage, to work, in preparation for H and HR arriving home. Eat an apple-apricot fruit roll made by M’s cousin with fruit from her orchard.

12:46 p.m. H and HR come home.

12:49 p.m. Hear my child’s sweet voice upstairs after he washes his hands.

12:55 p.m. Try to schedule a car seat inspection.

1:00 p.m. Miss a proof (my contingent work) because my laptop volume was off so as not to alert H to my being home. Read email from the weekend and happily discover an acquaintance has had a baby.

1:05 p.m. Job and job-search-related reading.

1:25 p.m. Bathroom and water. Restock toilet paper in the bathroom. Grab books I need from sleeping H’s room. Workers have gone to lunch so I heat some pasta.

1:43 p.m. Come back down. Discover Internet has disconnected. Miss another proof while reconnecting.

1:48 p.m. Decide to spend next hour on creative work.

2:15 p.m. Email the director of a translation retreat I’d like to attend. I don’t like emailing.

2:20 p.m. Read a little more online and then read the long intro poem to the next book I'm translating. Glance through the whole book, which I haven't picked up in a while. Feel glad about translating it.

2:47 p.m. Draft an email in Portuguese to another translator.

2:50 p.m. Pack up to go upstairs and say goodbye to HR. End up talking with her about H for 15 minutes or so.

3:25 p.m. H wakes up.

3:30 p.m. Worker needs access to outside water so I help him, then nurse H.

4:30 p.m. Go downstairs. H asks for a snack of bread and cheese (reprise of breakfast minus the pasta). I vacuum while H plays on the deck and waters the strawberry plants. We change his diaper. There is a small poop and he says he is going to make more later. I am glad my kid is aware of his body.

5:10 p.m. H eats dinner: pasta with olive oil and salt.

5:30 p.m. We play "up and down" and other imaginative games and read. H likes the pictures in "BraveTart" and wants to make animal crackers. I look around for cookie cutters and find a set of numbers 0-9.

6:45 p.m. H takes the cookie cutters out of their container and starts to name the numbers or letters

they might be. He manages to recognize each number, sometimes with a little help about which direction it goes or what it could be. I start washing dishes and overhear him counting to ten in Hebrew. I joyfully text my friend who gave us the Hebrew children's books.

6:50 p.m. H starts making another poop. M arrives home. I change H while M changes out of work clothes. We adults try to eat dinner (pasta with sauces), then H and M play.

7:10 p.m. I play basketball with H on the deck, then we go inside for his bath.

7:30 p.m. H asks to shower, so I decide to take his first shower with him. He dries off with M while I wash my hair. They get in bed and read. I put on pj's, then grab H's pj's out of the construction zone. M helps him put them on. I go downstairs to put dinner away, clean kitchen, and send a few texts to family and friends.

8:50 p.m. I'm called in to nurse H. I ask M to put the pesto in the fridge. The three of us say goodnight and turn out the light together.

9:25 p.m. H is asleep. I haven't brushed my teeth but I decide to go to sleep too. I'm asleep around 9:30 for the night.

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4:30am Feel husband rubbing me, trying to wake me up, but I can't wake up.

5:30am Hear the garbage trucks. It's too early still to wake up.

6:30am Wake up. Debate working out or having sex. Husband feels so good next to me. Have sex.

7–7:45am Make all the breakfasts—waffles and peanut butter, yogurt, bananas, and new egg bites from Costco. Daughter wants cheese stick and Little Bites and I say yes because it's her first day of camp and I don't want to upset her.

7:45–8:30am We prepare the house to be painted today. Feel guilty about not painting it myself but I have a deadline for a show so I don't think I have time to do it. GE Appliance repair person and painters arrive at the same time. Camp buses arrive.

8:30–9am Run around the neighborhood. Look for the car with the teddy bear on the dashboard that has a little heart with curses on it. It baffles me that someone would accept this as a gift and proudly display it and I really want to remember what the words actually are because maybe I'll draw this teddy bear later, but I can't find it. I see a lot of walkers though, people pushing strollers. I think about my niece turning 6 months old today and wonder if she's eating real food now. Arrive home and take a quick shower.

9–10am Eat breakfast by myself—oatmeal and a banana. Call my mom and husband to catch up and then I catch up on emails. Trying to plan my youngest son's birthday party and friend's baby shower.

10–11am Work on my online classes. Have to put in zeros for students who never turned in midterms and wonder how they will react when they see their updated weighted total. Prepare Art History II unit on Native American Cultures and post it to the course and notify students. Prepare Pop Art and Minimalism units and post them to the course and notify students.

11am–12pm Work on “Tell Me Your Love Story” series. Trying to focus on submission from Ella so it can go in the show and to Tokyo. Have to transcribe her audio and make selections from the visualizations of the sound to prepare the stencil for the cyanotype. This is a hard part of the project.

12–1pm I take a break for lunch. I check on the painters who are also lunching and get them some cold drinks. I make a quick sandwich. I eat while working on birthday party plans for Sunday. Will he want fudge brownie cake pops or chocolate chip cake pops? All toadstool cake pops or toadstool and star cake pops?

1–3pm Work on “Tell Me Your Love Story” again. Now I'm working in Photoshop on the visualizations. It's intense. I contemplate buying an iPad and stylus because it might help the process. I break up looking

at my screen for too long with phone calls to schedule doctor appointments for vertigo that seems screen related and neck pain that seems related to my posture when I paint.

3–4pm Nap.

4–5pm I try and start preparing the last chapter for my Art History II class but soon kids come home from camp and I have to get middle child/older son ready for soccer. He's tired and throws a tantrum that his team uniform hasn't come in yet but eventually gets dressed and we all pile into the car and I give him a cheese stick and Little Bites for dinner in the car. We drop him off.

5–5:30pm I make an onslaught of phone calls while daughter entertains youngest son in the car. I have to follow up with the painter regarding an all-natural polyurethane for sealing the ceiling beam. I have to call my middle child/older son's best friend's mom because they boys have been fighting at camp and we want to help them sort it out.

5:30–6pm I take the youngest son and daughter out for dinner. Their favorite pizza shop is closed so we head to another. We each get a slice and I get a salad too. I'm astonished at how quickly the youngest eats his pepperoni pizza. He tries to write his name. Daughter tells us about her camp day. There's a lot of talk about who likes who and who dated who and I can't follow it but she seems happy, so I smile.

6–7:30pm Home again. I unpack backpacks and repack backpacks. The oldest and youngest shower and I get them ready for bed. The youngest sings camp cheers.

7:30–9pm Head back to Soccer Park and pick up middle child/older son. I take him to the middle school to meet up with his best friend and make up. His mom and I laugh a little about the pettiness of their fights. They pause to admire the fiery sunset. We're amused and impressed they notice it. They finish chatting and we head back to the car. Middle child/older son has to pee and I let him use the potty in my car, but he misses.

9–10pm Come home and put middle child/older son to bed. Catch up with husband and clean trunk of car. Daughter meets us outside to demonstrate the rocket that she made at camp.

10–11pm Watch "Brooklyn 99" while husband lays on me and I rub him. It makes me sleepy. We fall asleep.

11–12pm Sleep.

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6:45 Wake up to O. babbling from his crib, "Mama boobie, Mama boobie." I bring him into our bed to nurse and wonder how I'm ever going to wean him.

7:15 Ten minutes alone in the bathroom to get ready while husband reads to O. from a Tin Tin comic.

7:25 A scramble to get dressed, make breakfast (eggs and hummus, O. eats only yogurt), pack my lunch, make a smoothie for later, find socks and shoes and rain coat and boots for O., start to make coffee but give up because I can't find the pour-over device, and out the door with O. Argue with husband over something that seems important but which I immediately forget.

8:15 Drive O. to daycare and listen to NPR.

8:45 Stop for coffee after drop-off before going to work at my studio. Organize list of tasks for the day. Do some emailing (lose a big job). Work on upcoming photo shoot. Admin emails.

10:15 Arrive at studio and work on freelance illustration which is already in the land of many revisions. Phone call about photo shoot.

12:15 Lunch with studio mates. Tuna and crackers and baby carrots.

1:50 Pay daycare invoice (\$1,385).

3:00 Go to location scout for photo shoot.

5:00 Pick up O. later than usual. He says, "Skate-board," all the way home.

5:15 Arrive home and go immediately to back yard. ("Back-yard! Skate-board!")

6:00 Dinner (take-out tacos). O. keeps asking for, "Boobie," and wants to sit on my lap. He sits on my lap but I don't give him the boob.

6:30 Walk to grocery store and Walgreens with O. on my back for fruit, eggs, feta cheese.

7:30 Husband does bath time while I clean the kitchen. Contemplate looming pile of laundry but do nothing. Help with pajamas, hang out on bed with O. ("Cozy, cozy.")

8:00 O. In crib yelling, "MOMMY DADDY MOMMY DADDY!" I paint my toenails on the front steps while listening to a podcast. Look at Instagram and feel bad about myself and stagnating career. Take a bath even though it's too warm for a bath. It's nice to sweat. Shave my legs for the first time in months.

10:30 In bed watching Netflix with husband, a habit we keep trying to break. I keep falling asleep and can't follow the story.

11:00 O. wakes up crying. I send husband in, in and out and in and out until O. eventually goes back to sleep and so do I.

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12:00 am Still driving back from weekend away visiting friends, family, and performing the experimental puppet

show collaboration written by my (not quite 5 year old) child. She is asleep in the backseat. The dog is in my lap, my husband is driving this shift. Feeling victorious post show, but have a migraine.

1:00 am With husband team carry all in from the car, up 3 flights of stairs, crying child, arthritic dog and the most delicate puppets.

1:30 am First private time in several days. Take migraine medicine and edit post to songwriter circle, write up performance # 1 assessment and draft workshop performance invitations to send in the morning at a reasonable hour, wind down internet surfing, fall asleep reading.

6:10 am Wake. No one is up yet, but it is a work day. Dog needs to be walked. Make tea; no milk or any groceries to speak of. Feed dog. Drink tea with husband, browse headlines on our phones, despair at the state of the world.

6:56 am Assemble and edit photos from trip and show and husband's nonagenarian aunt's family archive. Husband finally takes out dog.

7:30 am Husband returns from the dog walk on the phone with his parents. Join conversation via speakerphone re: planning travel for family visits in the coming year.

7:56 am Sit for a minute after husband leaves for work. Begin unpacking.

8:15 am Looking for my music notebook for this coming weekend's gig while getting dressed and packing for child's first book club. Get child dressed.

8:53 am Headed to train via grocery store. Not rushing. Greet the building supers congregated on a stoop mid-block. Child spots a swallowtail butterfly on the walk at the corner. We observe for a bit and talk about life cycles. The butterfly is a bit tattered and possibly nearing its end. Don't want to rush the conversation but we need to get to the grocery for breakfast and a snack for the kids group. Child chooses "veggie straw" chips as breakfast despite gentle urging toward fruit. Opt out of the battle. Grocery clerk recognizes child by her superhero name. Eat breakfast chips on the way to catch the train.

9:17 am On train for several stops. Realize the pouch of school supplies I packed this morning for child is not in my bag. Did she spot it and move it? Did I forget in my tired post migraine haze? Get off at Franklin and rush into the nearest bodega everything shop to buy scissors, glue, and a paintbrush. Cash only. Amazingly I have cash for once. Surely, I already have a pencil somewhere in my bag. Can't show up to the first school group meeting without the proper supplies. Now we are rushing. Run back to the train as quickly as I can hurry child along.

9:31 am Waiting for the train. We are going to be late.

9:35 am Child spots the train poem “The Owl” by Arthur Sze and asks me to read it aloud to her.

9:44 am In Prospect Park, child resists hurrying. Needs water break. We spot and briefly watch a sycamore moth caterpillar before continuing on in (I hope) the direction of the kids’ book club meeting spot. Toggling between map and text apps on my phone, accidentally text my compiled notes from today to the Seattle artist with whom I usually have a weekly workshop call. Text brief apology with possible typos.

9:51 am Through Prospect Park tunnel. Child loves to yell and listen to the echo here. Yell with her. We will either arrive on time or not at this point.

10:00 am We arrive first to book club before any other families except the organizer. Child finds a big black button, 3 washers, a tiny red button, and a yellow bead. The kids have great explorations about the book. We brought pretzels as our snack to share. Apparently a lot of the kids are gluten intolerant. Art supplies were optional. Some kids are dressed as book characters.

11:36 am Receive a puzzled response from the artist from Seattle about my text snafu.

11:53 am Text with theater neighbor about meeting today to workshop the puppet show.

12:35 pm Ask child if we should use the bathroom at the library as we pass. She declines. We walk past the library. She needs the bathroom. We turn around. She plays and browses books for a few minutes then begins to run around without shoes. We are clearly overdue to depart and eat lunch.

12:59 pm Arrive at restaurant. Watch the fish tank. Order food. Wash hands. Watch fish and discuss how they are similar and different from our goldfish. Bookmark research on goldfish genetic variations. Eat. Starving child is no longer hungry.

1:56 pm Child is starving again. Already walking en route to grocery store. Accidental voice to text transcript, “why is spit running down your face stop pulling on my clothes no bubble tea.” It is big trash day tomorrow and the sidewalk is full of great patterned but trashed couches. Would stop to photograph but need to keep moving.

2:12 pm Cross the street to avoid the corner where someone is standing shouting, “Strange shit is happening! Strange shit is happening!!” Arrive at the grocery store.

2:34 pm Consult grocery list texted by husband. Texting about evening park playdate meetup, and new shoes being picked up by mom of child’s park friend. Continue texting neighbor about scheduling. Child finds a filthy feather which is the most valuable treasure

to date. Precipice of tired/hungry breakdown at my suggestion of not keeping the filthy feather. Discuss diseases which birds can transmit to humans. Again accidentally text nonsense to artist from Seattle. Again apologize. Construction sidewalk road block.

2:40 pm Child creates a "Troll Doll" from less filthy feather and washer. Carry home nearly million pound groceries. Add magnolia leaf to treasures child collected.

2:52 pm So many stairs. Haul groceries in. Dog not walked, garbage not tended. Help wash child's filthy feet.

3:18 pm Gather laundry, hand wash and hang. Bathe self and child. Check swimmers rash. Start new Spanish audiobook storybook.

3:34 pm Schedule laundry pickup. Attempt quiet time.

4:04 pm Trying not to fall asleep before pickup.

4:18 pm Bag laundry. Sore throat. Find ginger lozenge. Pour and drink kefir. Water plants. Wash cup. Child is asleep.

4:31 pm Text homeschool friend about books about feminist retellings of fairytales spotted in library today.

4:40 pm Send grandparent photo dispatch started this morning.

5:35 pm Snack, stir the bean pot started by husband. Daily debrief and division of evening duties. Continue morning conversation, reschedule Thursday workshop

performance of puppet show to Wednesday. Continue hunting for music notebook. Have a nosebleed. Feed dog.

5:52 pm Bring in assorted shoes, stuffed animals, car remnants. No music gig notebook. Begin to panic.

6:11 pm Rally and dress for playground.

6:34 pm Bring child to park to meet friends, husband takes dog to groomer.

7:05 pm Continue to plan with neighbor re: workshop puppet show. Gossip for a minute while the kids play.

7:15 pm Watch sparrows snack. Move kids to park fountain sprinklers and away from the known playground bully. Still too hot to be inside and awake.

7:29 pm Husband picks up dog from groomer and meets us at the fountain splash pad.

7:43 pm Neighbor drops off book.

7:55 pm Clean glitter explosion from the book club art project made by child today.

8:10 pm Watching Marvel Universe TV shows sequentially. So tired. So hungry.

8:19 pm Beans still not ready. Dish leftovers for late dinner.

8:23 pm Child rejects leftovers. Offer banana. Feed dog again. Manage homeschool Facebook group.

8:35 pm Husband starts tortilla Caesar salad wraps for dinner.

8:56 pm Done eating (again). Must be a growth spurt. Begin bedtime routine.

9:01 pm Stove off. Burritos tomorrow.

9:14 pm Child and husband now eating rice cakes.

9:22 pm Tomorrow's playgroup canceled, new playground meetup secured, note violin lesson schedule for tomorrow.

10:26 pm Closed last bedtime story. Lights out.

10:40 pm Water for child. Check Facebook due date for poetry submissions. Outline promised STEAM lesson plan for homeschool group to visit my beehive and check for possible meeting dates.

10:43 pm Beloved child please sleep.

11:03 pm I think she's asleep.

11:14 pm Nope.

11:17 pm Maybe. Check fitness tracker on phone. 17,971 steps over 8 miles today. Sleep.

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2:20 am. Awake, my son (mid-twenties, Asperger's with unique ways) is up and turns on 4 lights to go to toilet,

has a verbose conversation with himself and goes back to bed. I am awake, try all manner of ways to go back to sleep, pray, toss, turn.

3:32 am. Still awake, hear the cry of stilts, plovers and other sea birds across the bay. The steady, distant, low hum of a trawler echoes faintly in the dark. I check the time.... Aaagh! Eventually fall asleep sometime after this.

5:00 am. Alarm goes off, I wake, husband wakes, turns on a low light, gets dressed and goes and makes us and our son a coffee. Enjoy my coffee and am mindful of the day ahead, count my blessings, thank God and get up.

5:30 am. Cook myself poached eggs, cook some porridge for my son, and iron my husbands' work clothes. Am aware of the daylight creeping in and marvel at the bay coming to life through the wide expanse of balcony glass.

6:00 am. Encourage my son to eat breakfast now, as we have to leave home early today for him to start his first day at orientation week for university and the uni is the city. (He has achieved much to get to this point in his studies and has asked me to take him in just for this morning.) We eat breakfast, then in next hour, my husband and I make our bed. I shower, dress, have vitamins/tablets, pack a snack of nuts, water bottles and say goodbye to my husband who leaves for work.

7:00 am. I ask my son if he has everything for today, he assures me he does, my son and I leave home in my car. He talks about his latest interest, I listen and when there is a break in his conversation I ask him if he really does

have everything he needs for today. This necessitates a return home at 7:10 to retrieve a forgotten item.

7:25 am. We stop at the service station for cash to pay for parking and continue on into the city.

8:30 am. Arrive at uni, park the car and pay for parking.

It is very cold this year for a Queensland winter and we are struggling against a chilled wind as we navigate our way around the enormous campus to locate the student ID building. We take some time to find it and it is cold.

Wait as my son gets his ID card as there is a long queue.

9:20 am. For the next 40 minutes my son checks out places of interest to him as he waits for his first scheduled activity. We check out the bookshop, son is as mad about stationary shops as am I. I buy a charcoal pencil and a special pen I have been looking for. He finds the student clubs and societies, where he has an interview with a volunteer about his interests. He is happy over the opportunities available. We walk to the cloisters in the large courtyard and locate the building where he will be studying.

10:00 am. Son attends his drop-in session, I wait in the waiting area, it is warm here. Afterwards my son decides to join a campus tour and as it is a good hour before his next event I say goodbye to him and go back to my car. I locate my youngest daughter's new workplace on my maps and also in my dog-eared street directory and drive across the river to the other side of the city to see her.

10:30 am. Arrive at the shopping center where her workplace is. She has recently been made manager at the Whole Foods store there and is busy when I arrive. She sends me to buy her a coffee, I get myself one as well. Am impressed with how well she is handling herself, the store and her customers. She is so excited to see me but as she is in her workplace I do not want to bother her so busy myself getting some flours for my baking and after paying leave her to her job. It is only when I get back to my car that I find myself overwhelmed and feel unsettled and a little out of sorts. Drive out of there and start crying, I am so confused but pull myself together as my oldest daughter also lives in the city and has asked me to visit her. Drive across city, across river and go to the inner-city suburb my other daughter lives in.

12 noon. Park at daughter's apartment building, (make note of time as parking is for 2 hours only, will be towed after that). She buzzes me in and I go upstairs to her apartment. My daughter is a shift worker and we sit in a darkened room as she is only just awake for the day. We talk about her job, her life and her recent ex-husband. She is adjusting to her divorce, it is an interesting time for her. Spend an hour with her, am calm and at peace, leave her to her day.

1:00 pm. Start the drive home, reflect on my mixed emotions and arrive at conclusion that I am relieved that my "unique" son has started his new venture with equanimity; happy that the youngest daughter is newly

engaged, has recently left home and moved in with fiancé, made manager of her store and is so confident and both sad and relieved for the other daughter who is recently divorced, newly single and sorting her life.

2:00 pm. Arrive home, eat my packed snack and some heated leftovers, make a cup of tea and sit on the couch. The wind has got up and howls around the unit block where we live. I am suddenly exhausted by the morning and fall into a fitful sleep.

3:20 pm. Awake with a start as my neighbor is using an electric sander. Eat some bitter chocolate and make another hot drink. I turn on heater and for next hour try out my new pencil and new pen and sketch, "Impressions of a windy day at UQ Uni." Research further on my current art project in some library books I have out.

4:30 pm. Husband arrives home, make him a cup of tea and talk about his work day and my day and our children.

5:00 pm. Son arrives home (he caught train home), he greets us and has a quick conversation about his day. At 5:10 pm. I ring my mother and talk over her day. At 87 she is a carer as well as mother of my two younger brothers who are disabled in various ways and we discuss her latest care options that she and my extremely competent sister are working out together. These two women are such strong ladies and are so inspirational to me.

5:30 pm. Start dinner, make enough for my husband to take to work tomorrow. Make Spaghetti Bolognese, quick and easy. We all eat dinner together and wash up together. Listen as my son tells us more about his first day at orientation week, excited for him!

7:00 pm. My son goes to his room, my husband makes a cup of tea for us both, and we both share it and watch some TV.

7:40 pm. Brush teeth, cleanse face, moisturize and get into my pajamas. Say goodnight to my son. Find myself in another very long conversation about his interests, he needs to talk tonight. He has a full day and has much to offload in his excitement.

8:30 pm. Get into bed. My husband and I have a desultory conversation, say prayers and wish each other a goodnight. Am asleep sometime soon after.

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1:01 AM–1:17 AM: Nurse baby. Baby's eyes are closed the whole time, long peacock frill of lashes.

5 AM: Put pacifier in baby's mouth. (This doesn't work).

5:03–6:40 AM: Nurse baby. Sit on the floor, leaning against the mattress as baby lies against me and looks around, eyes of awe. Stand and sway with baby. Rock baby.

6:41 AM: Wake up husband, who walks around the house with baby and socializes with our friends who are hosting us in Athens, Georgia.

7:30 AM: Get out of bed, talk with friends, take turns holding each other's baby, walk around outside, have coffee, eggs and peanut-butter toast.

7:50 AM: Try to nurse baby who just wants to sleep. Husband takes baby and puts her down for a nap.

8 AM: Oldest daughter and son wake up. Kids refuse eggs: "They don't have pepper!" We dump four goldfish crackers out of a Ziploc bag and recycle it for "Joe's O's" cereal. Our friends just moved and are not set up.

8:30 AM: Son scrapes knee, nose, and big toe. Husband cleans cut. Son even puts on his own ointment proudly.

9 AM: Say goodbye to friends. Kids ring the doorbell a garish 20 times.

9:10 AM: Pump 7 oz. of breast milk while in the passenger seat as husband drives. Jump back to the middle bench to feed baby.

9:30 AM: Come back to the front seat. Oldest pops up from the back to the middle seat, and tells me the baby has just pooped. I go back to the middle seat and change baby (just pee).

10 AM: Daughter and husband smell a poopy diaper. I go back and change baby's diaper.

10:30 AM: Stop for a bathroom and snack break by a lake. Make son a peanut butter sandwich. Husband asks for one too; make him one and a half sandwiches. Daughter only wants plain bread. Son eats his sandwich while sitting on a tree stump at the lake's edge. Husband and daughter contrive to catch a "pumpkin seed rainbow fish" using an orange bug catcher. Kids toss bits of bread into the lake to attract fish, who eat and dart away. Wear baby in baby carrier, enjoy the bubbling swish of lake water maybe feeling the wake of a boat. Walk back to car, and make my own peanut butter sandwich.

11 AM: Realize I stepped in dog shit. Clean my left shoe with baby wipes.

12 PM: Coffee break. Husband and I switch, so I can drive and he can rest a minute.

1:30 PM: Switch drivers again. I pump 6 oz. for the baby. Husband and I discuss hotel options and the need for a fitness center tonight. Look at pictures of a swan raft in a hotel pool, think how much we'd enjoy it, but \$200 is too much.

2:30 PM: Feed baby. Fold son's orange-and-white blanket into a rectangle (special fold three times) though he request a triangle shape with his hands. He smiles and smooths out the blanket.

3 PM: Stop for a snack and bathroom break. Kids get red power drink with electrolytes. Daughter says thank you so vibrantly; son, too.

3:30 PM: I drive for a bit.

4 PM: Stop for a snack. Switch drivers. I read “Go Dog Go!” to my son, who then picks up and “reads” to me, having memorized most of the book except for a few pages he has me read. We play with his lion stuffed animals, a lion party! We play jumping into the pool. Daughter hands me a “picture” she drew on my husband’s phone: it says, “I love you mom” in what looks like red paintbrush strokes. Fold blanket for son again.

5 PM: Husband drives. I nurse baby in car.

6:45 PM: After 460 miles on the road today, we stop for the night. Find hotel in Petersburg, Virginia, which has a gym and an indoor pool. No swan raft.

7 PM: Whole family swims in indoor pool at hotel until the buckets of chlorine burn out eyes. Baby in her watermelon bathing suit. Daughter and I swim together to the 5 foot-mark.

8 PM: Bathe all three kids in the hotel tub while husband goes out to get us veggie burgers. Both kids take turns washing baby. Baby tries to eat washcloth.

8:30 PM: We all eat in bed. Kids eat in bed in their pj’s. Baby plays with veggie burger wrapper next to me on the bed while I eat. I hold baby, sing to her, kiss her neck and cheeks: so nice to hold her after so much time in the car.

8:45 PM: Let kids listen to an audio book about donuts (hate donuts!) on my phone as we forgot the kids’ books in the car. Husband works out at gym while I put kids to bed. Fold blanket the special way for son. Each kid falls asleep in his/her own queen bed for now, and husband will move daughter over with son later.

9 PM: Kids are asleep. I pull the blanket back from over my son’s head; he doesn’t stir. I bring baby into the bathroom so she doesn’t wake up kids. Trim her nails while sitting on the closed toilet seat. Then trim a few of my own nails. Leave nail trimmer out for husband.

9:30 PM: Husband comes back from gym. We look at our daughter who is strewn across the bed. Her legs look suddenly long, her feet huge. “Look at our first-grader!” my husband says. Something terrifyingly sad and awesome about looking at how much she has grown so quickly. Husband moves daughter to the bed where our son is sleeping. I worry that no one else can put baby to sleep at night. After some encouragement, I go the gym.

10:02 PM: Husband texts me that baby is asleep. I respond with the heart-eyed emoji.

10:15 PM: I come back from the gym and take a bath. Baby wakes up. I nurse baby and put her back to bed.

10:55 PM: Baby is asleep. Think about sex, think about writing, think about things I could be doing with my

time, but tired after some 23 days away from home and about 4,000 miles driven. We had sex last night, and we will again tomorrow. I will write tomorrow. Husband and I go to bed.

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12:00 I help the boy (N) down to the bathroom. Can't tell if he's actually awake or not so follow his half-asleep walk closely. We've lived here 6 months but he doesn't know the house well enough yet and keeps losing his grip on the banister.

12:20 Other half (OH) is trying to remember who was talking about The Eagles, the band not the creatures, on the next-door island. He's on his phone. I'm writing this. We're not often this quiet together. We pick a podcast and turn out the light.

03:33 Wake up. Amused by the time at first, but then not. The boy has been on the outside 8 years already but I still can't sleep through a night.

07:30 The house kicks me into action. I listen to a few minutes of the local radio station and think about the coffee brewing downstairs.

07:45 Make it down in time for a near-perfect rendition of the event I've been trying to record for weeks! No time to grab the gadgets, but I soak it all in with eyes and ears: the inter-island ferry passing behind the

houses, the wake approaching the shoreline, slowly, slowly, and eventually, the waves crashing all around the piers and nousts.

07:50 Take coffee upstairs but OH is still sleeping. As is the boy. As should I be, perhaps, but I love this early morning quiet time. So back downstairs, and do the Monday thing: thinking about the day, week and month coming. I'm nervous about (not) getting good work time—my first solo exhibition is looming, and I crave some quietness to prepare it in. But it's holidays, my studio space is actually our dining/music room, and there'll be folk in and out the house all day in all likelihood. Following advice from someone south, I decide to prioritize documentation of my previous work: digging through an ancient hard drive, scanning flyers and preparing web pages too if time allows. Much easier to stop/start this kind of task as needs be.

08:30 I wake the boy—he looks enormous all stretched flat. Then I head outside to catch the return journey of that same inter-island ferry. I borrow OH's camera, but run out of space on the memory card almost immediately. Forgot to put my own in. All lessons to learn. There are beautiful wake patterns in the water when they finally reach me a few minutes later. I love living here.

08:55 N is downstairs, playing a "London's Burning" dirge on his green plastic recorder in that out-of-tune

way that only kids can manage. Too much concentration required for that though, and he swaps instead to blowing that wild chaos that recorders seem built for.

09:40 I talk with OH about a plan for today. They'll help me in a bit (OH with scanning) but they'll sit around a bit first—OH on laptop, N in a comic. Outside, it's turning into a beautiful day and I'm sad to be planning to spend it inside on the computer.

09:48 My Monday morning “risk assess epic fail” alarm goes off as I'm pulling on odd socks (Monday on the left foot, Thursday on the right). I feel pretty decent: I managed all 3 of my “big rocks” last week, and I've already recognized the major task for this week.

10:15 Simultaneously film—and sound—recording at the back: the inter-island ferry departing and the mainland ferry arriving. It blares its horn, twice, and I jump, wondering if the recording will distort. The sun is burning already! Here!?

10:30 No sign yet of my assistants, big or little. So I head upstairs and negotiate an 11am start, something concrete to aim for. Coffee back on. Feeling scattered and drawn between finishing old projects and starting new; making and telling; being alone and in company. I google “how to work at home in the school holidays” and print out a little checklist to keep beside me at my desk.

10:40 Meditating on rule number 8: “Do not feel guilty,” as I go outside to make two to-do lists, one for

work and one for the family tasks that keep distracting me sideways.

11:00 OH and I begin the scanning, while N is finally getting dressed. “Mum, my pj's are sleeping in your Crocs today!” he shouts down. I go to investigate, and sure enough, they are.

13:00 After two unexpectedly solid hours, I creep upstairs to see why things have stayed so quiet. N is reading a book... not a comic, an actual book! I give him a kiss and creep out again. Pretty sure he didn't even notice me.

13:30 Eating lunch outside on the pier—eggs, spinach and OH's bread. N drops half his egg on the flagstones while trying to eat it like a lollipop. I give him half of mine, but wonder if I've upset OH in the process.

14:50 OH is scanning N's shiny Batman cards alongside my old flyers, finding out the shiny bits just go black in the digital version. OH asks N to do his violin practice alone today—he eventually gets started but two minutes later the doorbell rings and a friend of his is here asking to play.

15:50 I reach a suitable stopping point (images, sound and video all found and gathered up) and go outside. Kids are all splashing /screaming in the water, but the twins from next door are way too close to the water outflow pipes.

16:30 N and I go shopping. He's on his bike, cycling ahead and waiting for me to catch up in each spot. The freedom of an 8-year old is brilliant up here. The library, the butcher, the bookshop. Done. Then photographing our lego protest people on their Extinction Rebellion demonstration outside the art gallery. Plastic is in our blood!

18:15 OH and I prepare dinner together—an unusual occurrence, but one I enjoy. We eat outside on the pier again, but a neighbor lands a boat and starts gutting a fish on the noust below. N peers down and watches everything. I'm pleased as he'll never learn that skill from us, but OH is upset, I think because the meal is interrupted and N isn't eating. I meet the neighbor's daughter, a jeweler, and talk about art for a moment. She invites me to check out her studio and I invite her to my late summer show. I wish we weren't eating and bickering amongst ourselves right now. At least I'm no longer wearing the toy octopus as a scarf.

19:15 Ouch. Sometimes the hardest thing about parenting is the partnering. Don't have capacity right now for listening to bleak perspectives on things I would otherwise feel positive about—not very supportive, not very proud of myself in this moment....

20:00 So grateful for family help nearby. It's one of the main reasons why we moved here, after all. I drive 5 miles to see them with N, and we discuss "gratitude" the whole way. Feeling much better by the time we arrive.

21:00 Back at home, beginning bedtime. OH is out on committee duties.

21:35 It's high tide, the sea is only 10 paces from the house. There's a massive full moon rising above the horizon in the south east though sunset won't be until after 10pm sometime. N's in bed, with blackout blinds and a blindfold too, listening to "Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy." I'm alone for the first time since before breakfast, not sure what to do next. Will play 10 mins of my game, Two Dots, while I decide.

21:45 And another 10 mins.

21:55 Still none the wiser on what to do, but suddenly aware how late it is. Head outside to enjoy the last light, the calm water....

22:15 Texting friends, knowing it's too late for any replies tonight. Get a "ping" though, and it's OH saying he's heading home now. A bit more screen time, individually, when he's back. I fall down a Two-Dot rabbit hole on my phone.... It's been a while.

23:40 Eventually, getting ready for bed. Tempted to climb in with the wee one as I pass his room, but head to my usual spot instead, as usual. I leave the door and blinds open as OH is already asleep and I don't want to wake him. Pick a podcast and let go of the day.

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Sometime in the middle of the night—the little one said, “Mamma, food,” nursed, fell back asleep.

6:30 - Husband’s alarm goes off and wakes me up. Get out of bed, switch a load of laundry, bring dry laundry upstairs, sit on the couch and talk about the new color of the couch with husband.

7:00 - Sit and write morning pages.

7:15 - Big kid is up.

7:25 - Little kid is up, we all four stand in the bathroom together and admire the newly painted radiator.

7:30 - Husband pours the coffee and gets yogurt and granola, I sit in the kitchen and nurse and fix big kids belt.

7:45 - Outside to sit on patio to eat breakfast, big kid and I get a plant watering lesson from neighbor.

8:30 - Inside.

8:40 - Husband and big kid go out the door to go to work and camp. I try to figure out why there is no internet. Give up. Get dressed, little kid puts on my shoes and tries to walk around. Put 3 bobby pins in my hair.

9:00 - Change a poopy diaper, put little kid on my back, switch laundry.

9:15 - Read books on couch.

9:45 - Make another cup of coffee, straighten kitchen, play hide and seek with the pantry door, name all the truck magnets on the refrigerator as little kid moves them and points. Make grocery shopping list. Go outside to look at a real garbage truck he hears in the alley. Big smiles all round.

10:45 - Get ready to go, clean diaper, put on shoes, pack bag with snacks, water, wallet, changing stuff, etc.

11:00 - Out the door, walk to the grocery store with little kid in stroller.

11:20 - Arrive at the grocery store, shop, check out.

11:35 - Done, walk to the park to pick up big kid. Share a bagel with little kid as I walk. My friend calls, talk a bit.

12:00 - Hang up the phone and get big kid from camp. Call back friend and talk while boys play in the wood chips with a couple of other kids.

12:30 - Walk home, big kid on his bike, little kid in stroller. Take a little detour to see a fire truck parked on a street. Stand around for a while, drink some water, eat some trail mix, no action, so we continue home.

1:26 - Arrive home, it’s 96°. I’m about to pee my pants. Get all the groceries and little kid up the stairs and open the front door. Yell at big kid for sitting on the floor in the doorway and letting the AC out. Use bathroom. Sit on couch and look at my phone while the boys play and wrestle.

1:40 - Little kid gets bonked on the head, cries, comes to nurse, falls asleep.

2:00 - Lie him down, go see what the big kid is up to. Make lunch, put groceries away, eat lunch with big kid and try to talk about what he did at camp instead get a long and complicated description of his imaginary friend's bagel-making machine. Make a peach tart with big kid.

3:30 - Put tart in the oven. Little kid wakes up, sit and nurse and chat with big kid. Respond to some text messages.

4:00 - Take the tart out of the oven, read books with the boys, then they play with cars.

4:30 - Husband comes home. Little kid has an old remote he is using as a phone and saying "Hello" over and over very loud. I start water for pasta and husband starts making meatballs. I duck out to the living room for 10 minutes alone. Back to kitchen, nurse, carry little kid around on my shoulders and clear off and set the table.

5:30 - Sit down to eat.

6:00 - Done eating, talk with husband about some scheduling stuff, decide to skip my jewelry class tonight. I'm feeling premenstrual, and this recording my day is giving me imposter syndrome.

6:20 - Eat tart.

6:45 - Trim a hangnail on big kid.

7:00 - Husband takes boys to the park. I stay home and work on a project and listen to music.

8:00 - They return home and start getting ready for bed. Get cups of water for everyone, switch laundry, play a little Screech with little one and encourage, not help, the big one to get ready for bed. Change my clothes, brush my teeth.

8:20 - Read books with everyone.

9:00 - Go to bed with the little one with the intention to get up, but fall asleep.

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Wake up at 5:30 with the girls.

Preschooler stays in bed.

Carry toddler with me to the bathroom.

Toddler's diaper is very wet so I strip the sheets while girls wander around.

At 6 turn on PBS and run upstairs to start the sheets.

At 6:30 get everybody dressed to take my sister to the doctor.

Put food in the cooler to bring for lunch at my friends.

At 7:30 bring the stuff out to the car, then go upstairs with the girls to switch the laundry.

Go trade cars with my sister who has better AC double back to double-check that I had locked the door.

Put in eleven dollars of gas.
 Listening to Disney Princess CD.
 8:18 Preschooler says my tummy hurts and needs to go potty.
 Preschooler points out a rainbow.
 8:25 We stop at gas station, preschooler says she doesn't need to go.
 Arrive in bigger town and pick up my sister to go to her appointment.
 9:00 Find the sunglasses I thought I left at home.
 Drop off sister.
 Go to grocery for breakfast. Kids whine the entire time.
 Preschooler begs for pear and then throws it once she tastes it.
 I eat chips and salsa and drink a coffee.
 Pick up sister from appointment. Drop her off at her home.
 10:30 Go to friends house.
 Leave for home at 12:45.
 Got back to town and switched vehicles.
 Girls did free play while I tidied up.
 2:30 Snack
 Friend and her kid come over.
 We talk while the kids destroy the apartment.
 6:00 Friend and her kid go home.
 We eat many popsicles.
 Hot dogs for supper.
 8:30 Bed.

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5.01am I wake up and hope that it wasn't the baby that woke me up this early. I face the clock and strain my ears till I fall back asleep.
 6.54 It's broad daylight now and M is definitely not awake yet, which is also not ideal. I brush my teeth and pee, leaving the bathroom door open, hoping that will wake her up organically. It hasn't.
 7.03 Back in bed, spoon J for warmth. Our window AC unit freezes the living room at night so the bedrooms stay comfortable.
 7.20 J wakes her up. She won't nap if she sleeps any longer. He brings her back to our bed and she nurses.
 7.30 I tell her it's 7.30 and she excitedly hands me "Tar Beach" and continues to nurse while I read that and three or four other books.
 8.10 I break away and sit in the living room while she cries for more boob. I worry about how and when to wean her. She nurses so much for a 2.5 yr old. I pee and check Instagram.
 8.30 I dress then join J and M building blocks.
 8.45 J leaves for work, I switch on the radio, boil water, make us toast. I wash some cherries, can cherries stink? They look fine, maybe it's my sink that stinks. The radio host says they still don't know what caused the blackout on Saturday.
 9.26 We leave the breakfast dishes on the table to go draw in the living room. I text J about groceries and we

decide not to get groceries delivered this week out of solidarity with striking workers. M stabs herself with a pencil through the paper that she was holding on her knees. She is equally upset about the hole in the paper and the hole in her leg. I put my phone away.

9.45 I change her diaper, put her nap pj's on. Then draw her one last picture, a garbage barge full of flowers pulled by a tugboat captained by M.

10.00 I realize the time and rush to make my bed.

10.12 Boob, book, prayer, it takes a while to convince her she's had enough boob.

10.26 Put her down and sing my way out of her room. I read a text from my mom while I make a second mug of tea.

10.42 I tiptoe, carrying the typewriter into my bedroom where the sound of the keys won't bother M. I open the windows. Shit. She's still awake. I read instead of starting typing.

11.20 I finish my book ("Sula" by Toni Morrison) and start typing labels and packaging today's book shipments for the bookcart.

12.15pm I video chat with my two long distance friends while I wait for confirmation on the last five books I need to mail, we talk about their trip to NYC to visit me and each other, our mental health, going back to school as 30 somethings, and scattered things about our kids. But mostly about ourselves.

12.55 Confirmation received, so I seal the books up.

1.25 M wakes up and comes into my bed for a boob... nurses for way too long, again. I try to distract her by FaceTiming my mom, but she keeps right on nursing. My dad inexplicably takes mom's phone and takes us on a hunt for his keys. I sign off.

2.00 I scrounge up lunch from nearly bare fridge— leftover potatoes, scrambled eggs with a few limp herbs.

2.20 We eat and I find a few new books I've been looking for for the bookcart. Then M asks me to read aloud from the next book I'm starting ("Territory of Light" by Yuko Tsushima).

2.35 I start the dishes while M shuffles around the kitchen in my sandals. Oh shit. I suddenly internalize the time, dishes can wait. I duck my head under the tub faucet to rinse away my bedhead. The water is still cold but that will keep me cooler outside. Rub some lipstick on my cheeks, etc.

2.45 Get M dressed in her "flower dress" that she's worn every day for nearly two weeks.

2.55 I hoist the stroller on my shoulder and begin the slow descent down the four flights of our walk-up apartment building. M takes each step achingly slow. She asks about the hardened drips of glossy black paint on the iron railing. It takes ten minutes to get to the bottom of the stairs. I strap her into the stroller and speed walk through the afternoon heat.

3.24 I make it to the photo lab to drop off film but I'm too late for same day pick up. M gets bored waiting in the small shop and starts squawking. The shop is

full of very cool people who don't have kids. I try not to get flustered but I'm stuck in there with people who are annoyed by the stroller and who are better photographers. Finally they shuffle around so I can get the door open wide enough for the stroller.

3.30 We walk a few blocks further to the indoor market. On the way I notice the tar seams of the street are glossy and oozing from the heat and I regret wearing a long skirt.

3.40 I grab eggs, bananas, bread, coffee and some vegan cheese for tomorrow's family dinner with Uncle Charlie. I get M a cup of yogurt and we rest in the seating area for a bit before going back out.

4.32 Post office to mail stack of books.

4.45 Arrive at playground. I take her shirt off so she can get wet in just her overall shorts. I hope she has enough of a base tan and/or stays in the shade. She does not stay in the shade. She uses her tin pail to make friends, the Chinese-English language barrier is no object to toddlers sharing a bucket of water and sand. My bench feels as comfortable as my own living room and I pull out my book.

6.00 We start home, stop and chat with the family that runs the produce stand next to the bridge. L gives M an apple and L's dad shows us his hand that just came out of a cast.

6.20 We arrive home and check the mailbox. There are a few books, one in very iffy condition that I will need to try and get my money back on.

6.22 The very, very slow ascent. I am carrying all the groceries, the mail, and the stroller and the baby decides she is no longer independent and wails to be carried.

We are maybe the loudest neighbors in our building.

6.30 I wash dishes while a moka pot of decaf brews. M is at my feet begging for a boob and "Gilmore Girls," of all things.

6.45 It's nearly bedtime and I'm drinking iced coffee, watching cheesy tv and she will not be off the boob in a while. J texts and says he's stuck at the photo lab because they got his photos mixed up with a roll of photos of one Chinese man alone at a beach. I think he should take those because they sound hilarious. But they told him to wait and they would fix the mistake.

7.30 I make cacao e pepe plus peas. M starts eating.

7.45 Poor J finally makes it home, we light candles and all eat together.

8.05 I put M's pj's on and brush her teeth while J does the dishes. Then we dance to his singing in the kitchen for a few minutes. And I wash a pair of underwear in the sink because I don't want to go to the laundromat.

8.10 Boob, book, prayer in big bed then M to her bed.

8.30 We collapse on our bed and look through J's photos, they are so beautiful. We count mosquito bites, scroll Instagram, read, and J finishes up some writing for a deadline tomorrow.

9.40 I work on the mouse I'm stitching for my new nephew and mend the two holes in M's flower dress.

I stitch a daisy over one and a sun over the other. I prefer fixing to creating lately.

11.05 I wash the shirt so she can wear it in the morning.

11.10 I start to run the shower and get distracted by disturbing news articles at our president's latest racist rant against the best congress has to offer.

11.40 Shower.

12.01 Bed.

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05:15 2 year old daughter wakes me, breastfeed baby while I snooze.

05:45 Cold immersion in a bath.

06:00 Shower.

06:10 Spring water collected from a spring, propolis lemon, vitamin C, Foldex.

06:15 Dry hair with hair dryer.

06:55 Breakfast organic oats, nut milk, pineapple and mango soya yoghurt bee pollen.

06:58 Baby wakes up, my mother goes to her.

07:01 Baby and grandmother come downstairs.

07:06 Baby refuses breakfast only wants breastmilk.

07:15 Baby eats breakfast; strawberries, oat cakes.

07:25 Get into car, drive to Newport train station.

08:19 Arrive at station, daughter waves and says bye bye.

08:41 Catch the Newport to Paddington London train.

10:14 10 year old daughter's primary school rang. I had forgotten to give in permission slips.

10:31 Worked—creating an online course called cosmic clay courses.

10:40 Arrived at Paddington.

10:56 Taxi to Leicester Square.

12:00 Arrived at audition for “The Great Pottery Throw Down.”

13:30 For legal reasons I am not allowed to disclose anything about the audition.

13:35 Failed audition, feelings of disappointment and lost opportunity.

14:00 Grumpily go around National Museum barefooted as shoes rubbing.

16:00 Decided not to go to Tate, feet hurt, catch the Waterloo Line back to Paddington.

17:05 Drink camomile tea and ring mum to see how everyone is doing. Daughter enjoying Sunday and playing with water.

17:22 Rang eldest daughter at one of her school friends house. She had a great day, the school has been learning about the Titanic, everybody dressed up as passengers.

18:45 Caught train back to Wales.

19:07 Hand-expressed in train toilet, drank my own milk and put some on my face.

20:35 Arrived at Newport station, mum and dad waiting, baby asleep.

21:05 Arrived at mum and dad's, baby awake and happy to see me.

22:15 Baby finally asleep, been jumping around, babbling and breastfeeding.

23:06 Check Facebook, ring my partner to say goodnight, go to bed myself in the same bed as daughter; a mattress on the floor at my mum and dad's, exhausted.

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12:40am - Daughter cries from her room. I get up, go to her room, tuck her back in. She falls back asleep quickly. I pee and go back to bed. Have trouble falling back asleep. Lie in bed itching mosquito bites from our weekend camping trip. Listen to husband snore beside me. Think about calling electrician, making house repairs, suspending gym membership, photo editing work I need to do, etc.

3:20am - Still awake. Can't believe it. Daughter wakes up again. Go to her room, tuck her back in, kiss her face. She grabs my hand and falls asleep again in minutes. I extract my hand, go back to bed, and lie on my back vaguely feeling myself fall asleep. Try counting sheep/clouds.

Wake up when I hear our housemate go to the bathroom. Coffee maker starts sputtering, so guessing it must be about 5:45am. Listen to sounds of housemate making breakfast, opening jars, boiling water, letting the dog out the back door.

Husband's phone starts vibrating as alarm goes off. He snoozes it and rolls over.

Sounds of husband putting on clothes and getting ready for work.

7:30am - Husband sits down on side of bed to say goodbye, and leaves for work. I lie there but can't fall back asleep. Sit up in bed and do some light reading ("American Prison" by Shane Bauer).

8:10am - Daughter wakes up, tells me she can RUB her mosquito bites instead of SCRATCHING them as I've told her not to. We change her diaper and read "The Berenstain Bears" and "The Slumber Party."

8:45am - Say goodbye to our housemate, pour coffee, get the mail, make scrambled eggs and toast for breakfast while daughter tends to her various dog toys (all named after our housemate's actual dog). Jot down a brain dump of various financial things to remember to do.

9am - Daughter and I eat breakfast at the table and discuss how one of the new leaves on the big houseplant has unfurled. (She has named the new leaf "Frances.") We also discuss composting, papa's wisdom teeth surgery, the dog, the cows at the Tilden Park Little Farm, and the wisdom of drinking lots of water when it is hot out.

9:20am - Sit outside on the back steps in the sun to clip daughter's dirty camping toenails. Start a load of laundry. More coffee.

9:30am - Change out of my pj's, come out of bedroom to encounter daughter walking very slowly toward the bathroom holding an overflowing cup of water. Suggest that she try filling the cup a little less full next time so that it doesn't spill. Mop up floor with a towel. Follow the water trail to a puddle on the kitchen floor, mop that puddle up too. Throw towel into laundry pile. Finish unpacking duffel bag from camping trip.

9:50am - Friend calls and I pick up. We talk for 30 minutes about marriage, relationships, friendships. I have her on speakerphone so that daughter can hear. Sit on the front steps. Daughter walks her dog-on-a-string around on the front walkway, while the real dog wanders without a leash or collar down the sidewalk and greets another dog walking by on leash. I come down the front steps just in case the dog encounter turns ugly, which it doesn't. Daughter trips and falls on sidewalk while distracted by walking dog-on-a-string. I brush her off and kiss her while she cries, holding phone on my shoulder against my ear, and walk back into the house with daughter on my hip while simultaneously herding dog back inside and listening on phone. Hang up with friend, wash daughter's hands off, give her a Band-Aid to play with.

10:30am - Brush my teeth (finally), put in contact lenses. Transfer laundry into the dryer. Daughter stands on closed toilet seat lid and drops sunflower seeds out the bathroom window while I pull her hair into a

ponytail. Daughter fetches a plastic water bottle and pours water out the window to water the seeds she just dropped.

10:45am - Help daughter pack her Spider-Man backpack with an apple, string cheese, Hedgie the stuffed hedgehog, and a note to Bob Dylan (don't ask). WE LEAVE THE HOUSE! Make a Safeway trip to buy random groceries, a large plant pot, and celery to feed animals at Little Farm.

11:22am - Arrive at Little Farm. On the way there, in the car, we discuss fears. For example, our housemate is scared of birds. Daughter is scared of the dark, but likes birds. Mama (me) is scared of heights.

11:30am - Feed the cows and sheep at Little Farm. Visit the rabbits and chickens. Play briefly at the playground. Daughter asks me where babies come from, and I tell her about how a seed grows in mama's belly kind of like a seed growing into a plant in the ground. Emerge from the whole convo feeling very capable.

12:35pm - Drop off some food outside of the house of a mom friend who is unexpectedly in Intensive Care at the hospital. There has been a call for her friends to bring food to support her husband and toddler while she is in the hospital.

12:45pm - Lunch at the local taqueria (tried and true—kid-friendly menu, wipeable surfaces). Daughter demolishes a side of rice, and we share an horchata.

1:30pm - Home for nap time. I find a 2019-2020 school calendar in a pile near the front door and spend some time highlighting relevant dates and scribbling them into the wall calendar. Daughter wanders into the bathroom and happily fills random buckets with toiletries, including tampons and DayQuil capsules.

1:50pm - Change a poopy diaper, read "Secrets of Winter," "out of bed" (the term for reading a book in my lap rather than while lying in bed). Tuck daughter in and read out loud until she drifts off.

2:13pm - Daughter asleep. Sneak out of her room and go into the living room to find the dog asleep and snoring on the couch, which he is not allowed to be on. Shoo him off onto his dog bed, where he promptly falls back asleep.

2:20pm - Bring laptop into bedroom and sit on bed to edit photos from a wedding I photographed a couple of weeks ago.

2:35pm - Skim through an episode of "Outlander" on Netflix, cry. Text with husband and friends/tenants about meeting an electrician to fix electricity problems that have been happening at tenants' house for past 2.5 weeks. Research camper van rental prices for a few potential upcoming trips. Go back to photo editing.

4:15pm - Wake up daughter so that she doesn't nap too late and end up going to bed at midnight. Upon

waking, she immediately says, "Close the door" (so that the dog doesn't come into her bedroom), followed by, "Where's [the dog]?" (Ambivalent relationship.) Change her diaper.

4:30pm - Successfully move the car seat from one car to the other, even though this is a job I have left up to my husband this whole time. (No good reason, we just sometimes let the other person take care of one specific thing for so long that it becomes "their" thing and then suddenly it's irrationally scary to do "their" thing.) It is more straightforward than I'd thought it would be. I feel competent.

4:45pm - Daughter says she wants a snack. I set her up at the table with one of those store-bought organic baby food pouches, and come back to find that she has consumed most of it while also somehow smearing most of its contents all over her face and shirt. Did this pouch have 200% content?? Wash her hands at bathroom sink, remove her shirt, start another load of laundry, take clean laundry out of dryer and dump it onto our bed. Get daughter dressed in second outfit of day.

5:15pm - Throw climbing shoes and chalk bags into a backpack on the off-chance husband and I have an opportunity to go to climbing gym. Pack daughter into the competently-installed car seat. Set off to meet husband and friends in Emeryville.

5:40pm - Find our friends inside Emeryville Public Market, having champagne at the bar. Husband joins us shortly from the train station. We all dispense to find food, then meet back at a table to eat together. Husband and I opt for brisket and hot link from Pig and a Pickle. Daughter industriously downs a full-sized bowl of Japanese ramen. Post dinner, we all play at the playground for a while as the sun goes down, all of us taking turns with daughter on the play structures.

8:30pm - Arrive home.

9pm - Bath time. Daughter getting noticeably whinier as it gets later. She has a dime-sized scrape on her knee from her fall on the sidewalk earlier in the day, and she insists I cover it with my hand while she's in the bath so that the soapy water doesn't sting it. I refuse to sit there next to the bath covering her knee with my hand for 15+ minutes. She cries for me to covvvveeerrrr itttttt. Very protracted and surreal argument with a toddler.

Finally wrap her in a towel and bring her into our bedroom, where husband is folding the clean laundry on our bed. I start helping with the folding. Daughter runs around the house nude. Eventually, husband brushes her teeth and starts reading "Mother Goose" book to her in her darkened room. I brush my teeth and get myself ready for bed, then come into daughter's room and lie on the floor as they read. Start falling asleep a little.

10:30pm - It's my turn tonight to put daughter to bed. I lie down on her bed, but she insists that I read out loud. Blearily read "The Berenstain Bears' Moving Day." She is still awake when I am done reading the book. I lie down on the floor next to her bed, holding her hand. Pass out. Wake up at some point to find her snoring, and stagger into my bedroom to go to bed.

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Mysterious guest of daughter #1 (21) departs noisily at 2am. Dog has delusions that it is breakfast time at 4:15 am, wakes her favorite human (daughter #2, 17) and me with manic door clawing. Situation resolved by normally forbidden treat of sleeping on my bed alongside kitten (the husband being deep in the archives of London/the wild lavender fields of the Cotswolds/HATE him). Just shy of 5:30 am kitten nips my nose. I rise. Feed the animals in the dark, rainy, gloomy winter's morn. Turn the heating on. Go back to bed, listen to audio book of SPQR with noise cancelling headphones on (garbage collection morning) hoping to learn the history of Rome by osmosis but after about 9 listens I can only seem to remember the rape of Lucretia. Doze. Son (16) wakes me at 6:50 in a first-day-of-new-term-and-I-have-autism-and-you've-already-fucked-up-my-schedule panic. I make his breakfast, sort his meds. Extremely nervous about his return to school after his recent hospitalization, I remain constipated. Daughters

wake and eat and turn all the lights on. Huge, stupid fight erupts over bus vs. train vs. me driving them to school. The only thing resolved is that I am a bitch. Dog goes crazy, escapes via broken front door, is dramatically rescued by son who dives into mud, ruining his carefully selected outfit. Mental collapse and panic attack ensues, accompanied by school refusal. Daughter #1 heads out to uni, daughter #2 to school. Son demands Valium. I administer. Things calm down, after I am accused of having BPD and asked to leave the family when father returns because nobody loves me and I yell too much, which is true (the yelling part). I deliver my I-have-let-myself-down-I-have-let-you-down-I-am-so-sorry speech securing weak amends. Needing groceries, I convince him to accompany me, fearing he is (again) suicidal. This suddenly makes me enraged: I am a horrible person: I am so frightened. He refuses to leave the car. I literally run around the supermarket grabbing essentials. Drive home. Feed him again. He goes to bed, to sleep. I make a coffee and stack dishwasher, very sad that for the first time in more than 7 years despite all international travel and hospitalizations this morning I have failed to do my morning physio-required yoga but it takes 40 minutes and I'm on a tight schedule so I walk the dog instead. Dog thinks all cars are electronic sheep, and pulls me over on wet footpath. Can not believe the shit that's happened and what a fuck-up I am and its only 10:45 am. Go home. Have an existential crisis in the shower: is it true, as

a memoirist and confessional poet, I exercise "acts of abuse" on my children, in writing about them (of this I stand recently accused, and have had writer's block ever since)? Am I a writer anymore or not? I read my emails and ignore as I do every Monday the one from my publisher inquiring about very overdue book. Feel ashamed and unprofessional. Read loving email from husband and am happy for him to be having a break from all this, the weather, the medical appointments, our deflated life, our disappointments. Get dressed. Eat yoghurt and berries and pack lunch. Use whole bottle of stain remover sorting muddy laundry and put washing on. Prepare son's lunch. Check son. He insists that if I don't go to my first-ever modeling gig he will hate me because I'm sure to use it against him because he ruins everyone's life (this is the same reasoning which sent me to Rome for 6 months residency last year, at the insistence of his psychiatrist). So I drive across the city and locate the warehouse. Meet fashion designer (up for an international award in ethical fashion) and other models: I tick the box for her which demands "age diversity." I am at least good for someone. I spend over 3 hours freezing, and posing in clothes that make me truly happy, getting to know nice people, delighted to be living in my body and not my mind for once, and feel healed. I am paid in cash. Get stuck in the carpark that is the main thoroughfare of Sydney Road. Arrive at the jeans factory and purchase son replica jeans in case stain removal enterprise does not work. Eat boiled eggs from

my lunch at traffic lights. Arrive home and make and eat late afternoon tea of cheese toasties with children. We are subdued. I walk the dog again, listening to the new rock album of one of the male models I met today. Feed the animals when I arrive home, and cook evening meal of vegan burgers and rainbow salad, and we have a jolly suppertime together although it is too rowdy for my nerves. I bribe children to clean the kitchen. I am dreaming of alcohol, in a very large glass. Have another shower and find and wear my favorite pajamas. Sort wet washing for dryer (success story re. stains!) and put another load in the washing machine, for which I have not yet paid. Fold the weekend's washing watching an episode of "Shetland" on Netflix wondering why I don't live on a classier, smaller, more charming island than Australia, before recalling that I really did not like living in Scotland one bit (fault of stepdaughters no doubt?) Do Italian lesson on app for 10 minutes. Locate discarded residency project and sketch out some ideas. Feeling very tired. Visit children in their rooms. Give son a mini-massage. Discuss 2020 plans with daughter #2 and give her money to live her 2019 life. Discuss wardrobe-cleansing with daughter #1 who helps me throw out jumpers I never wear. She goes to her hoops class and I retrieve them from thrift bag and hide them under my bed: one of them I wore through three pregnancies and I can't relinquish it. Make some herbal tea and eat chocolate. Send pictures of traffic jams and animals to husband and write a micro-love letter to him

on WhatsApp. Wonder if I'll ever write again let alone finish albatross of a book for which I wish I'd never signed the contract then feel so pathetic I pen a short prose poem called, "New Job" and post it on Instagram, pleased to have new friends/followers from today's warehouse escapade. Administer son's evening meds. Tell him to have a shower. Kiss everyone goodnight. Go to bed. Children turn on television very loudly. Text them to turn it down please. Turn light off. Worry about bill. Turn light on. Get up and clean teeth (I have never forgotten to do this before). Go to bed, take 2. Read until 11:57. Lights off.

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2:30 am - Child cries in her room and comes to sleep in my bed.
 8 am - Wake up.
 8:30 am - Prepare and eat breakfast.
 9 am - Clean breakfast leftovers from the floor.
 10 am - Try to read a text for a master's degree class while child plays.
 11:30 am - Prepare lunch.
 12 pm - Serve and eat lunch.
 1 pm - Walk with child to school.
 1:15 pm - Go to studio.
 1:45 pm - Work on art.
 3 pm - Meet with a client for a freelance job.
 4 pm - Back working on art.

5:45 pm - Leave studio to get my child from school.
 6 pm - Leave school with child and walk to the grocery store.
 6:40 pm - Get home from grocery store.
 6:50 pm - Start cooking dinner.
 7:30 pm - Serve and eat dinner.
 8 pm - Play.
 9 pm - Take and give shower.
 10:30 pm - Lay in bed with child.
 11 pm - Child is asleep. I get out of her bed to do computer stuff.
 11:45 pm - Go to bed.

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THIS IS AN INCOMPLETE LIST

430 am Wake up, try to go back to sleep.
 635 am Alarm goes off, check monitor, A (2.5 yrs. old) still asleep, hit snooze.
 644 am Alarm goes off, check monitor, A still asleep. Get up to pee. Go back to bed.
 653 am Alarm goes off, turn off alarm.
 658 am Brush teeth, wash face, get dressed.
 707 am Open my bedroom door.

710 am Open A's bedroom door, raise the shades, turn on one light, hand him "Big Bunny and Bird."
 720 am Give A "milks" (yogurt pouches). Put away clean dishes. Wash dirty dishes left in sink overnight. Rinse out coffeemaker. Fill Brita water pitcher. Wipe down counter, rinse sink. Gather laundry.
 730 am Me: "Are you pooping?"
 A: "Yes, squeeze it."
 I put the kettle on.
 735 am Tape together paper airplane. Put load of laundry in washer.
 740 am Empty kitchen garbage. Turn off kettle, make oatmeal. Pour juice for myself, drink 1 sip. Wipe down counter.
 A: "Need more milks!"—I bring him more milks.
 A: "Need pinecone!" —I hand him the pinecone.
 807 am Cut fruit and nectarine for my oatmeal. Set out A's oatmeal on coffee table. Start to eat my oatmeal.

- Rescue small toy dog from far side of crib three times.
- 823 am Take vitamins.
- 840 am Brush my teeth, change my clothes, dress A and change his diaper.
Make A's toast and gather his fresh fruit snacks, put his oatmeal in fridge.
Put sunscreen on myself.
Rescue A from capsizing in giant Tupperware boat.
- 855 am Set washed clothes on laundry rack to dry.
Put sunscreen on A.
Comfort A's foot which bonked on his big boat.
- 915 am Take A on bike ride!
- 930 am Visit firehouse in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.
Look at LOTS OF TRUCKS.
- 1015 am Ride away from firehouse on Nelson Street—so many trees and no cars!
- 1030 am Push A in swings in McCarren Park.
- 1045 am We sing duet of "Will the Circle be Unbroken?" while A swings.
A plays on playground, we hold hands when walking.

- 1115 am Bike ride home.
- 1145 am Make myself an iced chai latte.
Turn toaster oven on, ready mini quiches to bake for A's lunch.
Empty bathroom trash can.
Replenish hand soaps.
Try to fold clothes and put back in Tupperware bin.
Put quiches in toaster oven.
- 12 noon A eats his oatmeal cold from fridge.
We say, "Bye Bye Oatmeal!"
- 1209 pm Serve quiches.
Gather next load of laundry.
- 1215 pm Rearrange wet laundry on rack.
Remove plate of massacred quiches from windowsill.
(A was "cutting" them with his bobby pin tools).
Me: "Applesauce?"
A: "Yes."
I open an applesauce.
A: "Milk!"
- 1 pm Diaper change.
Get A and his room ready for nap: change into nap pants, lower curtains.
Sing "Tender Shepard" two times, holding A in my lap in rocking chair.

- Me: "Dear God, look after this boy."
Put A in crib, kiss top of his head, close door.
- 120 pm Make my salad.
Have 45-minute conversation on telephone with my divorce lawyer.
- 235 pm Eat salad.
Watch 20 minutes of Netflix.
- 3 pm Pick up A from nap.
- 315 pm Change diaper.
Turn on toaster oven to make mini waffles for snack.
Short video call with Nonnie and Grandpa Greg, Aunt Anna and TN cousins.
Fold clothes and put back in Tupperware, slide under bed.
- 4 pm I use the bathroom.
Make more mini waffles, serve applesauce.
- 425 pm Sit on couch for 30 minutes with A in my lap.
We look at post office magazine full of images of stamps.
We discuss the "Sesame Street" (which he has never seen) characters pictured on their stamps.
I sing, "C is for Cookie" and "Rubber Ducky" many times.

- 455 pm Put cream on boo boo.
Play "Big Boat Coming Into Pier" in living room.
- 520 pm Begin making dinner, A helps: "Fire so strong! So happy!"
Eat stir fry of veggies, shrimp, rice.
"Pop" snap peas open for A.
- 610 pm Wash dinner dishes.
Sweep rice from floor.
Say several times: "A, the broom goes on the floor not in the air."
- 615 pm Play Anne Murray's cover of "Animal Crackers" 7 times in a row.
Dance with A.
Play one Willie Nelson song, one Eagles song.
Play Carrie Underwood's "Jesus Take the Wheel" three times.
Stand in corner on A's instruction and, "Let the people sing it."
- 645 pm A's father comes home.
- 7 pm Finish doing dinner dishes.
- 713 pm Say family prayer and do nighttime blessings with A and his father.
Kiss the top of A's head, tell him I love him and will see him tomorrow.
Close his bedroom door.

Move his father's mattress into the living room.

Close the bedroom door, put my shoes in front of it.

Sit on the bed, watch A's father turn out the light on the baby monitor.

- 720 pm Email babysitter re: tomorrow's schedule.
Put Tupperware under bed.
Schedule Uber ride to courthouse for tomorrow morning.
Notice I am exhausted and dehydrated, feel this in my marrow.
Eat blueberry, spinach, cashew Lara Bar.
- 8 pm Take shower, shave legs.
- 825 pm Brush teeth and floss.
- 830 pm Watch 5 minutes of Netflix.
- 835 pm Receive email from lawyers, review and revise.
- 905 pm Send revisions to lawyers.
- 915 pm Send additional revisions to lawyers.
- 925 pm Have short phone meeting with lawyers.
- 926 pm Take an anti-depressant.
Go to the bathroom.
- 940 pm Watch 20 minutes of Netflix.

10 pm Go to the bathroom.

1009 pm Turn out my light.
Listen to 10 minute guided meditation.
Lay awake for at least one hour.
Maybe more.

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00:00 – Continue finishing some work on my computer.
12:30 – Take a break and search for a text book online for daughter.
1:30 – Back to work.
2:10 – Brush teeth.
2:20 – Wake up son to go to the toilet.
2:25 – Go to bed.
5:10 – Son throws up in bed. Get up and take him to the toilet, check his temperature, he has a fever of 37.8° centigrade. Give medicine to son then clean up the bed.
Put son back to sleep, then daughter wakes up and asks questions. Everyone back to sleep.
5:40 – Son gets up to go to the toilet, then back to sleep.
9:30 – Daughter wakes up and I tell her to go play something by herself.
10:10 – Son wakes up to go to the toilet, check his temperature again, he still has a fever. His stomach is a bit hurt and feeling hungry. Give son a banana to eat and then some medicine.
10:30 – Check with domestic helper if she is feeling alright, she got food poisoning from her friend's food

yesterday. Find medicine for her and make sure she knows what to eat and what not to eat.

10:40 – Call doctor and make appointment for son. Ask son to go to daddy’s room and sleep because daughter is making noise and non-stop talking. Prepare breakfast for daughter.

10:50 – Turn on computer and start working. Call the printing company to check on the birthday banner for son’s birthday party.

10:55 – Son throws up again.

11:05 – Son and daughter rest in daddy’s bed and watch TV, so that daughter will not bother her little brother.

11:25 – Get dressed, prepare clothes for daughter and son. Bookstore called and confirmed son’s textbook order.

11:40 – Drive and take son to see doctor with daughter.

12:50 – Drive daughter to summer writing class.

1:05 – Arrive at summer writing class and realize the class doesn’t start until 1:30.

1:10 – Got some crackers on my way out. Drive son home.

1:25 – Arrive home, give crackers and some medicine to son.

1:30 – My mum arrives to help. Check emails and start working on computer.

1:50 – Lunch is ready. Eat lunch in front of the computer and continue working.

2:30 – Drive and pick up daughter.

3:20 – Arrive back home.

3:40 – Back to the computer and work.

5:30 – Son says he has a headache. Give him some medicine and massage his head.

5:50 – Back to work as he resting on the sofa.

6:30 – Dinner.

7:10 – Son throws up again.

7:30 – Try to feed son some food and some medicine.

8:00 – Read book with daughter. Son complains his stomach is hurting again.

8:20 – Watch the news with son and daughter.

9:00 – Son brushes teeth and gets ready to go to bed.

9:10 – Daughter brushes teeth and gets ready to go to bed.

9:20 – Put both son and daughter to bed. Put bucket and water next to son’s bed.

9:25 – Back to the computer and work.

10:15 – Son is out of his bedroom and says he can’t sleep. Lay down with him in his bed.

10:39 – Back to the computer and work.

10:50 – Husband comes back home from work.

11:00 – Shower.

11:30 – Back to computer and work.

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6:38 - Wake up to daughter asking us if it’s really morning yet. Convince her to lay down and snuggle for a while longer.

7:38 - Finally rise out of bed. Breakfast options are special K or Raisin Bran. Just saw a notification on Instagram for a residency opportunity that I've been waiting to open up. I'll apply today. Not sure what else daughter and I will do today for entertainment. I'm now 5 days overdue.

7:41 - Meltdown due to no more milk in the fridge, and thus no cereal. Looks like grocery shopping will be on the to do list today.

8:46 - Out of the shower, sitting naked on the bed scrolling through social media while daughter jabbars in the kitchen. She's not allowed TV today because of a massive tantrum, unless she cleans her room. She doesn't realize this is as much a punishment for me as it is for her.

10:39 - Laundry is done, daughter and I are sitting in the studio. I am organizing test tiles while she feeds me imaginary blueberry and strawberry pancakes.

10:46 - Feel a contraction. Probably a false alarm, hopefully not.

11:24 - It was definitely a false alarm.

12:54 - Ham sandwiches for lunch, then everyone is off to the midwife for an over-due ultrasound and non-stress test. Daughter clarifies it's important she has the chance to tell all the nurses her name when we get there.

5:14 - Back from doctor, the baby boy still has plenty of fluid and a strong heartbeat, so he will continue to stew. Grocery shopping didn't happen, but daughter is happily playing with the cat before the brewing thunder storm really hits. Take and bake Costco lasagna for dinner it is.

6:56 - A few minutes of quiet while husband and daughter are outside in the front yard. Sitting on the couch waiting for lemon bars to come out of the oven before I do anything else.

7:28 - Reading on the porch while guarding the lemon bars on the railing from the dog and cat.

9:07 - Daughter is asleep. Book choices tonight include "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," and, "I Love You Through and Through."

9:59 - We sit down for an evening show. Part of the sweet battle is keeping my husband from squishing my stomach too much as he tries to hear the baby.

11:03 - Before we go to bed, husband goes to check on daughter, and nearly trips in fright from her standing awake right behind the door. We both agree that nothing is scarier than unexpected small people in dark places. Then we discover his fright also caused her fright and she unfortunately peed on the floor where he found her. Clean up ensues.

11:21 - All in bed, though daughter will most likely join us in the early morning.

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00:00 I sleep.

02:00 I wake up to close the window and cover my daughter with quilt.

04:40 My daughter calls me. I agree with her with murmuring voice.

05:40 I wake up again & am enchanted with my dream so I want to continue. I keep dreaming and discover further part of dream.

06:40 I wake up breastfeeding / hugging my daughter as this time she came to my bed. I talk to her. I prepare my homeopathic medicine. I do my very quick exercise routine with a bit of yoga. I shower. I observe my thought each time I am showering if my child is OK as I haven't call gas service yet to check if there is everything working well after repair that I managed to have done 2 weeks ago. I cook and eat millet and miso soup together with child and prepare gluten-free also for kindergarten.

8:00 I open the door to my ex, welcome him with kiss, ask him to wait for child. I make my bed and brush my teeth. I kiss our daughter and wish them a good day.

08:10 I go to work. On my way I receive a flower for supporting flower sellers rights.

08:20 I receive a book by Maria Poprzecka and a gift for my child from Khedi Alieva. I am in the gallery and go to the Refugees Center as I curate 2 different artists at the same time. I continue my self-run residency started

in France while I am in a car. I eat salad prepared by an artist.

17:30 I am with my daughter earlier as my ex asked me if I can do it. I go with her immediately to the gallery to finish work, give her a gift from Khedi. I go out as she changed her mood totally. I can't get to her with words. I hug her and say nothing, walking with her holding hands.

17:45 I enter with her to vege resto. I order her favorite pita and juice. I do not order for myself. I chill out. I skip brainstorm for new art project.

18:30 I go home and see my boyfriend walking to my place. I hug him and kiss and ask for changing plans for now. I do shopping. I negotiate with child.

19:20 I check if I start bleeding.

19:30 I cook and eat rice and eggplant sauce with child.

19:40 Artist-in-residence comes to bake a chocolate cake in my oven. I watch this performance with child breaking chocolate.

20:10 I play foam with child in bath.

20:30 I read her goodnight stories. She tells me her day. I almost fall asleep.

21:00 I hear the second artist came.

21:15 Child is hungry. I give her banana.

21:30 She falls asleep.

21:35 I open terrace. With artists we do salad and talk. I light candles.

22:00 I open the door to my boyfriend. We go all together on terrace. Eat and drink and talk about

queering reality. I give blankets and artificial fur as it gets colder. We watch the cake in the oven. I take child from the floor and put her back on her mattress.

23:50 I feel I get my period / I am bleeding.

00:00 I wash blueberries and we eat.

00:40 I take shower.

01:00 I fall asleep next to my boyfriend.

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12:58 am Stayed up on a rare late night alone, sipping a Campari Spritz. I worked on and submitted a writing project, then looked for some furniture to put into the playroom some moms and I fought hard for in our apartment building and won. I should've gone to bed hours ago and I know I'll pay for the late night tomorrow, but long, quiet, productive nights like this make me feel like the old pre-baby me again. I miss her, now and then. I can hear my son (and husband) exhale loudly from time to time from the bedroom one room over, and I'm thankful that now the baby finally sleeps through most nights.

1:07 am Brush my chompers and climb quietly into our big family bed.

7:37 am Baby rustles and wakes me up, or maybe I rustled and woke him up. Either way, we both wake up. I tried to nudge my husband to go make him breakfast, but he said he was too tired. He got the iPad and gave it to me to set up for W. I put on "Sesame Street" and tried

to fall back to sleep but instead started reading the awful news. After that there's no way I'm falling back to sleep.

7:50 am My son cuddles up beside me and nurses for a couple minutes while I read. He asks for breakfast, so I get up and make eggs and tortilla chips while he plays with toys. I make myself a bowl of cereal—Toasted Os. He wants cereal now, too. He wants it like I eat it, with cinnamon and chia seeds sprinkled on top.

8:23 am Texting with friend about what to do with kids today. Should we go to a water park? A ferry ride? Butterfly conservatory?

9 am Husband comes into kitchen and gives son a kiss, grabs a banana, says he's going to work, gives me a kiss and splits.

9:10 am I do dishes and clean up kitchen. As I do, I think about how my husband used to leave around 10 for work and how I'd still usually be asleep in bed. The olden days.

9:17 am I talk to my non-mom friend on the phone for a few minutes. My son follows me around with a can of Play-do for me to open for a few minutes saying words I don't understand until I realize he's trying to get me to open the Play-do.

9:20 am I end the call with my friend and sit on the floor next to my son. We play play-do til 9:30, then get changed and ready to go to the playground and meet our friends.

9:45 am Out the door with a giant backpack full of stuff, stroller, sunscreen, hat, change of clothes, water shoes and sneakers, snacks, towel, etc. It looks like I'm moving vs. taking a little jaunt to the park.

10 am We meet our friends on the street on the way and all walk to the park together to play in the sprinklers. We pass a barking dog. My son starts crying and refuses to walk, get into the stroller, or move so I carry the 35lb kiddo in the hot sun for 6 blocks til he calms down. The whole time I talk to him about dogs and how the dog won't hurt him and how he's safe if I'm nearby because I'm his protector. It's the same speech I always give him when he's scared and I just hope I'll never have to really be tested on that spiel, or that if I am, I can prove victorious.

10:10 am We arrive at playground. There is scaffolding covering half the park due to construction and about 1,000 kids there with a day camp (realistically more like 30) who are older and bigger than our kids. I'm on edge, wondering how much trouble I'd get into if I body check a tween to keep my kid from getting knocked over. I try to keep him off to the side away from the crowd. I swear, half my day is spent being pissed off in a playground.

10:20 am A tween climbing near where my kid is playing almost kicks my child in the head. The counselor who is maybe a year older than the kid comes over and tells him to get down. I'm impressed.

The group of older kids leave soon after and a park full of moms share a sigh of relief.

10:35 am A raggedy looking guy barges into the playground and demands money from my friend. She says no. He leaves the park screaming. My son is nearby playing with flowers. I'm simultaneously nervous about signs saying the garden was treated with rat poison and the raving maniac.

11 am We eat lunch and share snacks with our friends.

11:52 am Home for nap time. Shoes off, hands washed, wet clothes removed, diaper changed, new dry clothes on, lie down for nap. He goes out like a light. I sit and write for an hour til he starts to scream for me.

1:12 pm He's up and tired still but I don't want him to try to nap longer because it makes bedtime harder if his nap is too long. He has a snack of crackers and cheese and carrots and we build a giant train village.

2:30 pm We hurry over to his speech therapy appointment. It's about a mile walk away and it's humid and hot. We get there and they say there is no appointment today, it's now on Tuesdays. I check my email to see if they notified me. They did, but I missed it. I get an ice coffee and he gets a small cup of ice cream to compensate for the heat and my mistake.

2:58 pm We walk home slowly. He insists on pushing the stroller. He continuously pushes it towards oncoming

foot traffic and I'm constantly saying, "Watch out!" and, "Sorry!" If I make him stop, he lies down on the sidewalk and cries.

3:36 pm We get home and go through the routine again. Shoes off, hands washed. He plays with his trains while I tidy up a little and then I flop onto the couch with my phone to peruse social media for a bit.

4:15 pm I encourage us to go back outside for a little while before dinner. We go downstairs to a nearby playground with a pared down operation consisting of a handful of water balloons and a few cups, his water bottle, my keys, sunglasses and cellphone. I leave him in his street clothes vs. changing to bathing suit. He romps around in the sprinkler. I fill up a couple water balloons for him in the fountain. He picks up broken plastic balloon remnants and tries to "blow them up." It's a solid 45 minutes of me repeating, "No," and, "We don't put things we pick up on the ground in our mouths," and, "Put that down," and, "Go throw that away." Finally around 5, we head in for dinner.

5:03 pm Inside, shoes off, hands washed. He plays with trains while I prepare dinner. It's usually always the same. Steamed broccoli or carrots, some form of chicken like a hot dog or chicken meatballs with ketchup and a grain, like rice or lentils or pasta. When it's done, I call my son and he comes quickly for dinner. He must be hungry. Usually, he pretends he didn't hear me.

5:25 pm It's a typical dinner. He eats while I sit nearby and chat with him. I ask him questions about the day or his food. Sometimes I sing or read him a book, sometimes I chatter mindlessly while checking email on my phone. He cleans his plate and asks for a cookie. I give him one.

5:45 pm His dad comes home. We decide to take a walk. We leave and saunter over to the new pier park they built near where we live. It's only a few weeks old and already, it's trashed. There are people who've appeared to build little homes and huts all over it, loud music blasting, garbage strewn about, the smell of weed in the air, people drinking and smoking cigarettes. It's sad. No security or supervision. It's nice that it's being used but people just don't seem to care about their community or their environment or understand how their behavior affects others. I leave feeling kind of bummed out.

6:25 pm We arrive back home. Daddy gives our son a bath and does the bedtime routine with brushing teeth, diaper and rash cream, pj's, reads 2-3 books and turns on the sound machine while I do my "New York Times" 7-minute work out, pour a big glass of water, brush my own teeth and get into pj's.

7:18 pm Daddy calls me in to take over where I lie beside my son in the dark until he falls asleep while he goes to make us dinner. Sometimes it takes 10 minutes for my son to fall asleep, sometimes it takes an hour. When his breathing slows and becomes evenly paced,

I know he's asleep and I usually skip out. Except tonight I'm tired. My husband texts me to ask if I'll be coming out. I text back no, and a few minutes later, I fall asleep.

10:20 pm I wake up. My husband is now beside me, asleep. The sound machine and A/C are blasting soothingly. I get up, pee, take a walk around the apartment, shut off the lights my husband left on and make sure the door is locked. It's not, so I lock it. I slink back into bed and fall back to sleep after a short time.

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12:04 I finish my wind down yoga, use the bathroom, and check the dryer for bunny number 2. Daughter threw up on it on Saturday, I've washed it four times. It smells mostly fine, but I might see if I can buy a new one tomorrow.

12:09 I plug in phone, turn on sound machine, and tell husband he's snoring and roll him over. I lay down in bed.

3:53 I wake up, check the clock, and go back to bed.

7:30 I wake up, check the baby monitor, she's asleep so I go back to sleep.

7:49 I wake up, resolve to get up but fall back asleep.

7:53 I wake up and check the baby monitor. I watch her as she stands up in her crib and looks around. She finds

bunny number 1 and lays down. She starts rubbing his tag and goes back to sleep.

7:58 I turn off my 8am alarm and scroll through Instagram. I check my email and the weather.

8:10 I get out of bed.

8:18 I make breakfast. I forgot bunny number 2 was out, I put him back in the diaper bag and see an old packed lunch. I clean that out and get back to making breakfast.

8:38 I get dressed and make the bed.

8:41 I wake up daughter and hand her a banana when she sits up. She eats it quietly then says, "No poop," to indicate she does not want her diaper changed. She asks for her "Dada" several times and I tell her he's at work but we will see him later. I pick her up and she cries about not wanting her diaper changed so I sing her a made up song about her bunny. We eat breakfast. She plays with her new cup, exclaiming, "I did it," every time she successfully opens the cup top. She asks me to put on the goodbye song—I do.

9:05 The sitter shows up, daughter screams in delight for sitter and shows off her new cup. We all sing the hello song greeting sitter, the cats, dada, and the new cup. I clean daughter up and clear the table.

9:18 I tell daughter we have to brush teeth and she runs into the living room so I threaten to brush my teeth without her. She runs to the bathroom yelling, "Wait!"

I put on a teeth-brushing song and brush her teeth. She insists sitter brush her teeth. They go to the living room to play.

9:20 I pick out clothes for daughter and bring them in to the living room. I realize she needs a diaper change. She loudly protests as I pick her up. Sitter reads her a book as I change her diaper. We get her changed and dressed.

9:38 I sneak out of the house because if daughter sees me leave she will meltdown. I hear her yell, "Outside!" as I close the door. I walk down the street to a coffee shop, order a smoothie, and sit down.

9:52 I Facebook chat with my husband, check emails, and work on my syllabus and supply lists.

10:59 I hear a baby cry and look around even though I know it isn't daughter.

11:09 Baby cries louder and I think about going home early—sitter is here until 12.

11:35 I decide to pack up and walk home. On the way, I walk to the toy store to check for a new white bunny but they only have pink, purple, and gray.

11:52 I arrive home. Daughter runs toward me and gives me a hug. I ask her if she had fun with sitter. She says, "No," but she always says no so I tell sitter not to take offense. I get daughter a snack—goldfish. Sitter leaves.

12:01 Daughter stands quietly outside of the open bathroom door while I use the toilet. She periodically comes in to check on me. When I come out she says, "Mama pee and Mama *makes a hand washing sign*," I tell her I did. She declares, "All done fish," when she's done and asks for more. I decide to make lunch.

12:24 I offer blueberries but she declines. She points to my guacamole and asks what it is, I tell her and she says, "No try," even though I didn't ask her to. When I eat some blueberries she begins to eat them. I tell her we have to share and she says, "No," then feeds me one and proceeds to eat the rest. She declares, "Mama all done," when my plate is clear.

12:58 I clear the little table while daughter plays with her bus. She hugs my legs and we go to her room. I pick her up to change her diaper and she screams that she wants to read books. I tell her we will read books after I change her diaper, this does not console her. We choose books to read. After we read books she asks for "Ma" (milk) so I nurse her.

1:28 I look through my phone as she nurses.

1:38 Daughter falls asleep while nursing. I unlatch her from my nipple and put her pacifier into her mouth. I stand up slowly and walk her over to her crib. I lay her in the crib and gently pull my arm out from underneath her head. I get the monitor and check it. I set things up on my desk for Nap Length Studio Time. I get my

water glass from the living room and see lunch leftovers so I clear the table again. In the kitchen I load the dishwasher and prep things for dinner.

2:02 I sit down for studio time. I draw and listen to a podcast.

3:23 I do a short yoga video before nap time is over.

3:46 Daughter is up, I go get her. The first thing she says to me is, "Elsa." I pick her up and ask for a hug, she says, "No," and pushes me away. She goes and sits on the dining room floor and asks for her snack. I sit down with her. She drapes her blanket over me, dances around the room, hands me her snack, and beckons the cat to come down from the dining room table. She asks to call grandfather.

4:04 She takes a mouth full of water and dribbles it onto the floor. I decide we need to go outside. I tell her we have to change her diaper before we go outside and she screams, "No!" repeatedly as I carry her into her room.

4:18 We finally get out of the house.

4:30 Our neighbor comes out and draws with us. She and I chat while daughter plays with the water table. I draw a crab with chalk, daughter dumps water on it.

5:00 Husband comes home from work and offers to go inside and make dinner.

5:35 I get a text from husband that dinner is done. I get her hands washed and set her down for dinner.

5:43 Daughter yells, "No!" each time husband and I try to talk.

6:15 Husband and I have an argument. He plays with daughter while I clean up.

6:34 I take a shower. Daughter comes into the bathroom several times during my shower and each time she leaves she says, "Bye see you soon," and closes the door.

6:43 I get out of the shower. I go in the bedroom, close the door, and wonder how long I can get away with just sitting on the bed.

6:44 Husband knocks on door.

6:45 I get dressed and come out. Husband and I have a talk about the argument. We come together for a family hug with daughter, I blow a raspberry on daughter's belly and she laughs. We put her down and she says she wants to play.

6:54 We draw on her easel with dry erase markers. She tells me to draw dada and the cats.

7:25 We FaceTime with grandfather. Daughter runs back and forth to show him how fast she is.

7:44 We end the call with grandfather and take a bath. Daughter lines up foam letters on the shower wall.

8:12 Daughter says she wants dada to brush teeth when I try to brush them.

8:18 Husband puts her into pj's and sleep sack while she plays with a singing toy. Daughter picks out books and we read them.

8:32 Daughter nurses and I look through my phone.

8:47 We finish nursing. I put daughter in her crib, sing her a song, and then we "blow out the light" together.

8:50 I leave her room and sit down on the couch. Husband asks if I want to watch a movie, I say ok, and he puts it on.

9:11 We pause the movie to check some facts we were debating.

10:31 We stop the movie to resume another night. Husband goes to bed.

10:40 I respond to a text and end up scrolling through Instagram and Facebook.

11:11 I pick up my book and start reading.

11:55 I put down my book and go to brush my teeth and start my wind down yoga before bed.

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8.40

Lying in bed listening to husband and second daughter M getting ready for work. Unexpected roadworks have begun right outside our house so the noise of drilling and our dog barking at this has made for an irritating start to the day. It was to be my only morning for the next seven when I could sleep late. Feeling anxious about having committed to too many projects. Washing machine has been acting up so I need to take laundry into town but instead I'm prolonging everything by lying here even though it's a beautiful sunny day. Ask son G to retrieve recycling bin so I can raid it for children's art workshop supplies but it's already been collected. Husband leaves in a hurry with blood on shirt having cut himself shaving.

8.50

Get up and throw skirt and shoes on with T-shirt I slept in, pin up hair and gather baskets of laundry to put in car. Son G wants to spend vouchers he was given for birthday on special online offer for Alexa or similar device. Cat following me around as he knows I'll feed him. Feed cat.

9.20

Drive ten minutes to nearest town and public laundromat, accompanied by son C who plays "Mr Blue Sky" by ELO on his phone, thus dissipating my anger at the arrogance of road workers closing the road without notice. Kids are great! Receive text from husband to

inform me he's arrived at the office without his laptop. I offer to bring it to him when I collect laundry, though the office is in the opposite direction.

10.00

Daughter 1 makes me a cup of tea and I eat a yoghurt before getting back into the car. Sons G & C play computer games. Eldest daughter G gets up while daughter L sleeps still as usual.

11.15

Return from errands. Have had heated words with foreman of roadworks regarding access to our house and not having been warned of diversion. Tar stuck to my shoes as a result so drove home in just socks. Now hanging vast quantities of laundry while kids watch TV. I can't be bothered to deal with that as I get tired of repeating myself. Also it's a novelty for them all to have eldest daughter G home as she has just returned from a grueling third semester of college.

11.30

Eldest daughter G has rallied the rest to do a quick clean up around the kitchen. I attempt to make various prototypes of craft projects using recycled materials for three days of children's art workshops beginning tomorrow. Thoroughly regret taking this on and wish I could be outside gardening in the sun or working on numerous personal art projects. Kids don't even question why I'm painting plastic bottles and glueing tissue paper to old cds in the middle of the kitchen.

14.00

Eat a cheese sandwich too quickly and smarten myself up to go to yet another art related workshop where I've volunteered to help artist friends put together window displays for an upcoming festival. Kids continue to snack and watch movies and YouTubers.

14.20

Leave slightly late for workshop, 40 minute drive away. Frustrated that I've had to abandon my workshop prep.

15.05

Arrive at venue to find that only three of us have turned up to work on window displays including the organizer and her daughter. One more artist arrives shortly after me and we spend the next couple of hours cutting out paper silhouettes.

17.15

Stop in supermarket on way home to pick up dinner for today and tomorrow, along with daily supplies of milk and snacks which will be consumed in an instant. Call husband to offer to collect second eldest, M, but he already has her so I head home.

17.45

Arrive home, kids all content and making the most of their school holidays. I begin prepping dinner though not sure when we'll eat it as husband heads straight out again with daughter number four, L who has camogie training and second eldest M as she's giving singing

lessons to the young daughter of friends nearby. We live in a very rural area and none of the kids drive yet.

18.00

Continue to brainstorm ideas on the laptop for things to create with kids tomorrow as I'm not confident that I have enough planned to fill the two hour sessions.

20.00

Everyone eats once we're all home; fish with salad and potatoes goes down well. I don't have the energy to do all I had planned but spend time chatting to husband and kids for a while over standard noise levels.

21.00

Usual minor disagreements about who loads the dishwasher, etc. Four daughters occupy most of the couch space to watch latest installment of reality TV show. I put some supplies into the car for tomorrow and chat with husband who also, typically, spends a great deal of time on his iPhone as his work is demanding and very much a part of our lives.

22.00

Watch a couple of reruns of "Seinfeld" and chill out. In the past I've been anxious about events such as tomorrow's workshop as I'm very introverted and don't sleep well. I'm trying to remain calm while husband and kids all offer reassurances. We have fun chatting to all the kids and watching shows with them.

12.00

We all start preparing for bed and I read a couple of pages of a novel to distract myself and hope for a decent sleep.

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12am Reading in bed.

12.12am Ready to fall asleep; turn off bedside light.

7.35am First alarm rings.

7.45am Second alarm rings.

7.55am Third alarm rings.

8.05am Fourth alarm rings.

8.06am Wake up.

8.10am Go to bathroom, brush teeth, stumble out of bathroom thinking about what a crazy wonderful weekend we had with a fantastic Saturday night dinner party that ended in me washing dishes until 5.30am.

8.16am Go to kitchen and help with breakfast and lunches for kids.

8.40am Say goodbye to husband and children as they go to summer school and work.

8.45am Respond to text messages, including texts from my director regarding preparation details for our short film "A Short Story's" premiere on Saturday at the LA Shorts International Film Fest, and a text from a new colleague who wants to have a conference call this week for a new project; send a few work emails; check in on the tasks for the day.

9.15am Go back to bed for a little more sleep.
 9.45am Wake up again.
 9.50am Make coffee and eat quick breakfast.
 10.10am Get in car and drive to physical therapy appointment.
 10.30am Arrive at physical therapy appointment.
 10.55am Grateful to be at physical therapy and feeling better already.
 11.40am Leave physical therapy appointment.
 11.43am Go into supermarket next to physical therapy to buy milk and bread.
 11.50am Find Old Spice Krakengård deodorant for oldest son who said he wanted deodorant last week—his first deodorant!
 11.53am Decide to buy a jar of organic peanut butter also.
 11.57am Pay for milk, bread, peanut butter, and Old Spice Krakengård deodorant.
 11.59am Almost leave behind the container of fruit the physical therapist gave me as a gift, but the gentleman behind me in line points it out to me and I say thank you as I take the package and leave the supermarket.
 12.03pm Drive home with purchases.
 12.18am Arrive home and make sandwiches for kids' lunches & drink more coffee, this time with milk.
 12.31pm Leave the house, with sandwiches and cookies and fruit from the physical therapist for the kids' lunches, and drive to the kids' summer school locations to pick them up.

12.41pm Pick up oldest son who is waiting outside next to the middle school.
 12.42pm Give oldest son deodorant; he is so happy.
 12.47pm Park car next to elementary school and pick up the younger two children; talk to middle son's new friend and let him know that I texted his mother over the weekend about possibly getting together tomorrow afternoon at the community pool.
 12.55pm Drop off the three children at the Boys & Girls Club; I give them their sandwiches and other lunch snacks before saying goodbye; I remind them I'll pick them up a little earlier than usual because we have an outing tonight.
 1.18pm Arrive at my parents' house to receive a large delivery for them; my father is in Vancouver for work and my mother is in Chile with my grandmother because today is her 90th birthday.
 1.24pm The delivery truck arrives.
 1.33pm While waiting for the delivery men to bring the crates into the house, I write to my colleague in response to her question about when I will be able to send her the work I've promised.
 1.40pm I write to my other colleague in response to whether or not we can speak on the phone today about an upcoming event we are organizing—the answer is no, but I ask for a response to the long audio message I sent yesterday.
 1.43pm I write to my mother-in-law to find out if she and her husband are coming to LA this weekend to

attend our short film premiere; I let her know that I understand if she can't make it and that we'll probably do another screening in the Fall.

1.55pm I drive back home.

2.07pm I make myself lunch.

2.17pm I sit down with my lunch to respond to additional work emails, and to work—finally!!—on the essay I need to finish as soon as possible because my editor is waiting eagerly.

3.45pm I decide that I will not exercise today and instead keep working on my essay.

4.37pm I write a text message to our old babysitter to see if she can babysit on Saturday, which is the short film premiere and also my birthday; I don't tell her that the other people I contacted are not available to babysit, but I assume it's implied.

4.42pm I write a short and warm birthday message to my grandmother on WhatsApp, and I wish I had remembered to make a little video for her with the kids in the morning.

4.45pm I go to pick up the kids at the Boys & Girls Club.

5.05pm The kids come out and my daughter's new friend is also being picked up, so I meet her mom for the first time and confirm our plans to take the kids to the community pool tomorrow afternoon.

5.15pm I start driving home.

5.18pm I go back to the Boys & Girls Club because my oldest son left his lunch bag and water bottle there.

5.30pm I arrive home & realize my husband is already home.

5.33pm I tell my husband I'm running late and explain what I had planned to make the kids to eat before we all go out.

5.45pm Start getting ready to go out while my husband feeds the kids dinner.

6.15pm We get in the car and I drive us to the film screening of Steven Spielberg's "Raiders of the Lost Ark," starring Harrison Ford, hosted by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences—I was invited by my Chilean colleague who works for the Academy and who also produces films.

6.45pm I arrive at the film screening and enjoy the delicious food at the reception with my husband and kids.

7.05pm I meet some young filmmakers and comedy writers at the reception and talk about their upcoming projects; I tell them about my premier on Saturday in North Hollywood.

7.25pm We head upstairs to the theater to take our seats.

7.30pm While our middle son reserved us seats in the middle of the theater, he and his brother and sister decide we should sit in the front row, so we move our seats.

7.35pm The introductions begin, which will be followed by a special presentation on visual effects and sound effects for "Raiders of the Lost Ark." Alfred Molina, who introduces Ben Burtt and Craig Barron, is very funny and works the crowd.

8.30pm The film finally begins; I am relieved because the middle child is fidgety.

9.42pm The film is amazing in a restored 35mm edition that was recently printed from the original negatives—I watch my husband and daughter smiling as they watch the film; I am sitting between my oldest son and middle son and they are both enraptured; my oldest son whispers things to me every once in a while.

10.30pm The film ends and everyone is tired.

10.38pm After going to the restroom, I ask my oldest son to take a quick photo of me next to the film poster; meanwhile my husband is tired and antsy to go home.

10.40pm I drive home and the children are squirrely; my husband is at the end of his rope it seems.

11pm We arrive home.

11.15pm The oldest and youngest kids are in bed, the middle one is eating yogurt, and tension is brewing with my husband.

11.21pm My husband says something about how many days an empty Amazon box is going to sit on the floor.

11.22pm I do not resist the urge to say something in my defense.

11.28pm The middle child goes to bed.

11.34pm An argument begins to erupt with my husband.

11.39pm I am trying to stay calm and not react or respond to his tirade about how tired he is and how our family schedule is too full and too demanding.

11.42pm I lament the fact that I am not a more sage, centered, wise wife; I want to kill my husband; I decide

my husband is deeply confused about how amazing I am; I plot a million acts of revenge against my husband; I clean things in the kitchen; I decide to make myself a gin & ginger beer, an improved version of a gin & tonic, I talk to myself in an attempt to distract my Chilean ferociousness from unleashing in volcanic South American Edward Albee splendor.

11.53pm I take out my laptop and start working.

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05:11 Wake up to nurse C (23mo), take the puppy out to go potty.

05:40 Bring C back to his toddler bed and nurse him a little more so he can fall asleep.

06:20 C wakes up and nurses again.

06:42 C follows daddy to the kitchen to eat raspberries, puppy comes and gives me kisses, I meditate.

07:13 Get ready for work and get C and M (5) ready to go to the babysitter.

07:57 Chase puppy around the front yard to get her back inside.

08:03 Finally get the kids buckled up in the car with crumbly waffles and strawberries in hand.

08:06 Arrive at neighbor's house.

08:13 Drive to work.

08:40 Sit in the nest to answer emails.

09:01 Begin writing airport art masterplan.

11:29 Eat date and walnut bread, discuss airport art

masterplan with in-house designer, touch base with chief curator about airport art masterplan.

11:37 Review phase three deliverable with fellow curator in the office.

12:40 Prepare a bagged salad to eat and cut apple to top it off.

12:45 I am notified that an artist has shown up for her meeting. We sit down and discuss the design that she submitted for a 40' x 20' site-specific hanging sculpture.

13:25 Sit out in the front on the AstroTurf and eat bagged salad.

13:50 Return to the nest with my third 1/2 cup of coffee to complete edits for airport art masterplan.

13:59 Hear the laugh of my old boss from an art gallery and head over to say hello. Chat about her daughter who had a fever of 105 degrees over the weekend.

14:04 Return with a handful of gummy bears in hand to complete airport art masterplan before a review of the document at 14:30.

14:37 Review the portfolio of an artist doing bead work and mosaics on flat surfaces and trophy busts. Send emails.

14:45 Meet with chief curator and curator to outline next steps for airport art masterplan.

15:01 Meet with a graphic designer to gauge their interest in participating as a designer for the graphics of the airport art masterplan.

15:15 Return emails.

15:31 Consult with art administrator about the logistics of an upcoming art installation on 7/19.

15:42 Contact client's assistant about artwork transportation on 7/18.

16:02 Go to staff meeting, the CEO said we have a birthday this week and I looked behind me even though she was talking about my birthday.

17:03 Eat part of a celebratory birthday donut.

17:05 Finish up weekly assignments at work and coordinate an art install.

17:38 Head home and call dad on the phone.

18:01 Arrive at home and receive eager puppy kisses. C comes to greet me.

18:12 Cut up partially thawed chicken and learn about M's new "Ninjago" book from the library.

18:14 M goes across the street to play with friends.

18:15 C marches around the kitchen stopping every third step to spit out chewed nuts, I find the jar of nuts and put it out of reach, C notices that I moved his nuts and starts screaming, puppy follows C's tracks and licks up every small pile of chewed nuts, I add the olive oil, chicken, lemon juice, pepper, salt, and mixed spices to the cast iron.

18:16 Prepare salad for dinner while my husband, R, cuts a separate entry through the concrete in our basement, the walkout will allow us to have an artist-run gallery and residency out of our home.

18:18 C asks for a glass of milk and immediately spills part of it by trying to add a lid, puppy comes running to help clean up the spilled milk.

18:25 Finish cooking.
 18:27 Start a load of laundry.
 18:40 Take C to the potty while playing tug of war with puppy's rope and cleaning the kids room.
 18:42 Chase after C who is hiding in the closet singing.
 18:43 Take C across the street to pick up M.
 18:45 Call R up for dinner, R comes up with pants caked in mud. Dish everyone up lemon pepper chicken, salad with spicy mixed greens, figs, and tomatoes, and brown rice, C cries that he doesn't have his plate yet.
 18:47 We call my stepson, J (6), to say goodnight, but he doesn't answer the phone. The puppy eagerly licks up rice that C is dropping from his highchair, M eats a few pieces of chicken, drinks some milk, and leaves the rest of the food on his plate which he returns to the fridge and stacks above last night's leftovers. C eats a full plate of food.
 19:01 C pees on his chair in the kitchen so I carry him to the potty but it is too late.
 19:02 C returns to the kitchen and eats the rest of the food on his plate.
 19:03 R returns to working on the side entry and doesn't emerge for hours except to talk to J when he calls.
 19:06 Start another load of laundry and bring up the last load to fold.
 19:07 Look for C, M informs me that he is in his bedroom, look in the room and C is using the potty, yay C!

19:10 Brush the kids' teeth, help them take a shower, and switch the laundry out.
 19:42 J calls and we read books while I hold the phone and nurse C.
 20:11 I tuck M into bed and lay down in C's toddler bed to nurse him, R is still cutting through the concrete right below us so I turn up the white noise machine near full blast and sing lullabies over the white noise.
 21:03 I switch out the laundry.
 21:10 Return emails, C is quiet and has fallen asleep.
 22:01 Switch laundry.
 22:07 Clean kitchen, pack kids' lunches and mine, pack and unpack kids' backpacks, clean up the living room, cut and paint my nails, work on training the puppy.
 23:23 Fold laundry.
 23:46 Switch out the laundry, brush teeth, meditate, go to bed.

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12:33 am Washed the gunk off my hands.
 12:35 am Waiting for cash.
 1:04 am Got the cash finally. On our way home.
 2:30 am Go to sleep.
 7:55 am WAKE. Check if R is awake as well. Must meditate.

7:59 am Tell T I will meditate in the kitchen.

8:01 am Open Flip Clock app. Dive in deep meditation.

8:26 am Come out of meditation. Speechless about where I go when doing it.

8:28 am Shower. Text J about meditation experience.

8:37 am Out of the shower & feel terrible R is still in her crib. Think how she is so very much like us and I relax. I'm dripping & I get her in her room.

9:07 am Make Pancakes (panpapes!)

9:28 am Eat panpapes with R. T goes to studio. Day off means grocery store and day with R.

10:15 am Go next door to M's with fresh panpapes. R is afraid at first. She pretends to cry and lays on M's new rug. M is happy to see her. They start to play and run around the coffee table.

10:41 am Back home and build blocks and bridges with R. M's world feels light and pastel. Happy she is next door.

10:56 am Put load of laundry in. Go to grocery store and flower shop.

corn tortillas

bananas

blueberries

GF bread

ground beef

more bars for R
cheddar bunnies
granola

11:30 am Stop to watch crane and dump truck uplifting the plot of land where an old sweet house used to be. She must have sold it. R is completely amused. I'm happy to stop and rest and watch. We eat veggie sticks. R hates the oil on her hands from the sticks. R gets scared from the sound of the dump truck and crane. R wants to be held and carried home. My fatigue returns. We leave. I carry R. R is still freaked out. As we get further away, R repeats, "Dumptruck, dumptruck," and begins to calm down. R is so very in tune. R sees airplanes from very faraway. R hears them almost sooner than the visual. R is like an eagle.

12:53 pm R's nap time. Make bottle. Usual concoction. Change R. Big R is now here to watch little R.

1:06 pm Leave for total relaxation massage. So happy & excited for it.

3:27 pm Back home. Feel the cleanse. Lil' R still sleeping. R is on the phone.

3:29 pm Meditate.

3:53 pm Back in the world. Feel 100% x infinite.

4:00 pm R is up again. Text with T. He's happy to go to the beach—impromptu beach trip!

4:10 pm Pack for the beach, Get R ready. We drop Big R to the L train.

6:05 pm Arrive Tilden beach. So sweet. T is upset about his email. Makes me annoyed and feel scattered. I get more upset because the day was in full reboot mode until that moment. Try to let it go. R comments many times about the birds. “Birds so happy! Birds so happy!” Changes my mood very fast.

6:35 pm R touches sand in new way and is very fascinated. R grabs the sand by big handfuls, turns her palms up and slowly lets sand stream out. R does this many times. R smiles. I jump in the water solo.

6:45 pm Water is very warm and clear. Feels like a bath. Thankful for this moment. Feel a bit rushed. T crumples face on blanket. T still upset about email. R whimpers from the shore. This is my view from the ocean.

7:00 pm Out of water. R wants in. Go in water together. Barely wet her feet and she cries. It’s the sound of the waves. R begins to learn “Love & Hate.” T feels better. Change R. R is very sandy and sleepy (fifi). R is so very happy! R = beach baby. Thankful for this.

7:30 pm Stop for beer. So happy to share a moment with T. It is far and rare to feel this with him. Thankfulness continues. Family hug. R likes it! R normally cries profusely when T and I hug. Growing. Growing. Elated. R runs in big circles around the little food court. I’m nervous when she passes where I can’t

see her. Look for her shadow. Tell self to chill out. Walk to car. Happy trio again. T has let it go.

8:15 pm Home again. T goes back to his studio. Feel very tired and overwhelmed. Mood changes. Feel angry that I decided to do nighttime with R solo. My fault. A bit excited to bathe her.

8:30 pm Kitchen is hot. Fan is on. Cook sausages for pasta. Feel rushed and nervous. I try to calm down. Breathe deep. Can’t control time. R notices nothing. R is super happy with her toys. R’s toys—Giraffe, car, and Yoshi go to the beach. R is a blessing.

8:45 pm Bath time. Let bath almost run over. Fatigue again flows in. Feel terrible it’s so late. R is super happy. Happy because she’s happy. A blessing again. R is so light and full of light. Full of love and giggles. Go in bath with her. Forceful with the green comb to untangle her hair. More than usual. Makes me a little sad. Why am I in a rush? All feels distorted. Push through. Think about how big she is. How can she be 2.5? Enjoy the bath. Time is short.

9:15 pm Out of bath. On bed. Put coconut oil on R. R now wears long sleeve purple tie-dye from D given at R’s birth. Miss D so much. R is very sleepy. R talks of happy birds on the beach.

9:30 pm Now finally R is eating. Relief. R is not very hungry. R bites a few pieces. Move to living room to read a book. Light is dim. Feels nice. Cinematic. Read

“Owl’s Snow.” R has memorized the book. R eats. I ruffle R’s hair to dry quicker. R doesn’t notice.

9:52 pm Up to brush R’s teeth. R says, “Brush your teeth Gotti! Brush your teeth!” I laugh.

10:00 pm Make bottle. Walk into R’s room. R doesn’t want to hold hands. Sit w/ R in the dark. I sing rock a bye baby. R laughs through her bottle. I can see R in the dark and her sweet little grinning eyes.

I ask if she had fun at the beach.

R nods.

I ask if she loves the sand.

R nods.

I ask if she’s ready.

R cozes up to me. Her natural signal.

Put her down in her crib.

Lay blanket on her.

R is so cozy.

I say, “I love you x many.”

Pat R’s head and tiptoe out.

My favorite part of the day forever.

Apt is a mess. I don’t care. I tidy a few things. See a call from brother P. I ignore it. Text from P. I text back and forth about Bali. P misses it very much. I support him. P sends video of his trip. P asks me to watch first 5 min. I sit on the couch and watch the full 30 min. Send back text of love. Feel connected and miss him. My body feels very heavy.

11:07 pm Lay in bed. Deeply horizontal. Feel so good. Know I should close my eyes but click on my phone. Fall asleep.

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12:30 a.m.: Receive a text from 15 year old telling me goodnight.

2:30 a.m.: Go to the bathroom.

4:00 a.m.: Cat wakes me up to be fed.

4:30 a.m.: Cat wakes me up to be let outside.

6:00 a.m.: Alarm sounds, I press snooze three times.

6:30 a.m.: 9 year old wakes up, goes to the bathroom, turns the t.v. on.

6:45 a.m.: 13 wakes up and joins 9 year old.

7:00 a.m.: Wake up, enter the kitchen, and put the tea kettle on.

7:00 a.m.: 15 year old wakes up.

7:00–7:45 a.m.: Drink two cups of tea while checking on work emails and brief social media check as well.

7:45–8:05 a.m.: Make breakfast for myself and children.

8:05–8:15 a.m.: Take dog for a short walk around the block.

8:15–9 a.m.: Take 15 year old to volleyball camp.

9:00–9:30 a.m.: Morning walk to the beach with 9 and 13 year old.

9:30–10:15 a.m.: Morning chores (start a load of laundry, clean dining room table, do breakfast dishes, sweep and oversee children doing their chores).

10:15–10:30 a.m.: Phone call with bank.

10:30 a.m.: Drop 13 year old at friend's house.

10:45–11:15 a.m.: Play basketball in the driveway with 9 year old.

11:15–11:40 a.m.: Get ready for work (hair, makeup, iron clothes).

11:45–1:15 p.m.: Walk to work (consulting for a pre-college program at a local college).

1:15–1:35 p.m.: Make a salad and eat lunch with my 9 year old.

1:40–2:30 p.m.: Swim in pool with 9 year old.

2:30–2:45 p.m.: Make an iced tea and get dressed.

2:45–3:30 p.m.: Pick up 15 year old at volleyball camp.

3:30–4:30 p.m.: Rest time for everyone at home (read a few chapters in my book, edit a few poems in my chapbook, quick 20 minute cat nap).

4:30–5:00 p.m.: Finish a load of laundry, start another load, and make salad for dinner.

5–7:00 p.m.: Work with 15 year old to deep clean her room while my husband prepares dinner and plays soccer with 9 year old.

7:00 p.m.: Eat dinner.

7:30–8 p.m.: Have a glass of wine with my husband on the deck to catch up on the day and plan for tomorrow.

8–9:45 p.m.: Watch a movie, “Epic,” as a family.

9:45–10 p.m.: Take a shower.

10–10:30 p.m.: Write a poem for my chapbook.

10:30–11 p.m.: Watch a show with my husband.

11–11:20 p.m.: Have sex with my husband.

11:25 p.m.: Go to bed.

+

00 : 00 Sleep.

00 : 10 Baby U wakes up for nursing.

00 : 58 Baby U wets herself and the bed, change diaper and her clothes. She falls back to sleep.

03 : 38 Baby U wakes up, wants to nurse. Falls asleep.

04 : 54 Baby U wakes up and wants to nurse again. I realize I've strained my back and I have a horrible pain whenever I move.

- 05 : 58 Baby U wakes up to nurse.
- 07 : 00 Baby U wakes up to nurse. I am exhausted. She has been doing this for 9 months.
- 08 : 00 Baby U wakes up to start her day. Her dad N and her go to the living room and leave me in bed to snooze a bit more.
- 09 : 35 I wake up, dad N brings U to nurse while he makes breakfast.
- 09 : 46 We all have breakfast and spend some time together.
- 10 : 20 Dad N gives me a back massage to ease the pain. Unsuccessful, but I am very grateful.
- 10 : 45 I take a shower, and we get dressed.
- 11 : 00 Go to the gallery where I left my projection panel and take it to my studio.
- 11 : 40 Have coffee with N and U.
- 12 : 15 Put U to sleep, nurse her to sleep.
- 13 : 05 I am in bed with her all the time, U wakes up but falls back to sleep.
- 14 : 11 U wakes up from her afternoon nap.
- 14 : 30 Have lunch with grand dad and grand mum (we live in the same house).
- 14 : 45 A call for a potential job, mural paintings for a Gothic building.
- 15 : 30 Go upstairs and play with U.
- 16 : 00 Play guitar for U.
- 16 : 15 Go outside and play with U in the garden, it's a beautiful day.
- 17 : 20 Have a snack with U and listen to some music.

- 18 : 07 Meet dad N after work and go for a walk in town.
- 19 : 15 Have a beer in a pub and meet some friends to plan U's first birthday celebration for tomorrow.
- 20 : 10 Come back home and have dinner.
- 20 : 30 Clean U before bed.
- 20 : 45 Put U to bed and nurse her to sleep.
- 21 : 15 Surf Internet on my phone and search neo-Gothic mural ornaments (ideas for the potential job).
- 22 : 45 Put my phone down and fall asleep.
- 00 : 00 Sleep.

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1:10am — Wake up to daughter vomiting in bed between me and my partner (her father). This is the third vomit of the night, so we already have system in place where I hold her upright and strip off vomit-covered pj's while he gets towels. He lays a big towel down underneath her and changes my pillow case while I nurse her. She drinks a huge gulp of water and falls back asleep in my arms. I lay her back down between us, and we all fall back asleep.

1:55am — Wake again to fourth vomit of the night. Repeat our clean up procedure. More water gulping.

2:20am — Wake for fifth vomit of the night. Repeat clean up procedure, this time with crankier child who takes some time to fall back asleep while rolling between us, nursing intermittently.

3:15am — Sixth and final vomit of the night. Daddy takes daughter to the sofa in bedroom and she falls asleep in a more upright position lying on his chest and shoulder. We all finally sleep.

8:00am — We all wake up. Daughter is chipper and very thirsty. Daddy fills sippy cup while I nurse and chat in bed with daughter. She gulps lots of water.

8:20am — We get up for the day. Daddy makes coffee for us both while daughter runs around. Says she doesn't want to eat but I prepare flapjacks and cut up strawberries anyway.

8:30am — Daughter asks for milk in one of her tea set cups, which I'm reluctant to give because she always spills it. I pour it anyway, and a few minutes later it is indeed spilled in her play kitchen. Clean up the mess.

8:40am — Eat breakfast.

8:55am — Change diaper and get daughter dressed.

9:00am — Get myself dressed, wash face, brush teeth.

9:10am — Brush daughter's teeth while daddy gets dressed.

9:25am — We all get in the car to drive to house renovation site to check in with our carpenter.

10:05am — Discuss building details with carpenter while nursing daughter / hold her hand while she explores the construction zone.

10:30am — Drive around the corner to coffee shop, get a muffin and lemonade to share with daughter. Daddy gets coffee. Play at the table and watch customers.

10:50am — Get in car to drive home. Daddy sits in back next to daughter to keep her company while I drive.

11:25am — Arrive home and nurse while sitting on back porch and discussing more renovation details. Meanwhile texting with co-owners of property about some joint decisions.

11:50am — Make lunch for myself and daughter while daddy fixes himself some cereal. She refuses to eat, wants to run around instead.

12:05pm — Daughter seems too tired to eat, so go into bedroom to lie down with her but she perks up. We lounge on the bed, nursing a little, playing a little.

12:15pm — Change diaper.

12:20pm — Put daughter in the stroller for a walk to get her to sleep. Works almost instantly.

1:00pm — Return home, daughter still sleeping. Bring her stroller inside to the entryway to continue sleeping there in the cross breeze.

1:05pm — Check email.

1:35pm — Sit down to transcribe some of this into computer.

1:45pm — Read article about toddler tantrums.

1:55pm — Make notes about an art project I'm developing and presenting later this week.

2:05pm — Pay a bill and tidy up counter.

2:10pm — Gather some materials and tools for art project.

2:25pm — Eat a snack.

2:35pm — Call Subaru dealer to have them walk me through an automatic window reset protocol. Problem solved in one minute.

2:40pm — Sit down to read and put feet up for remainder of nap time.

3:15pm — Daughter naps longer than usual. Start dinner prep with my partner, including a meal train meal for friends with a newborn.

3:40pm — Chat and putter with my partner.

3:55pm — Daughter wakes up. Daddy gets her but she immediately asks for mama.

4:00pm — Change diaper and snuggle for a several minutes on the couch.

4:10pm — Start cooking meal train meal. Daughter plays with her toys nearby.

4:30pm — Meal finished, pack it up to take to friends. Put shoes on and grab purse to leave house. Daughter stays home with my partner.

4:55pm — Arrive at friends' house with meal. Meet their sweet, tiny new human, and chat with my friend (the mom) to hear about the birth, etc. I hold the baby, we chat more.

5:40pm — Leave to return home.

6:00pm — Arrive home. My partner is exhausted and stressed and he lets me know it, so I scoop up my daughter as soon as I'm through the door.

6:05pm — Start cooking simple pasta and leftovers dinner for myself and daughter while my partner finishes packing for a work trip.

6:15pm — Set dinner on table, try to get daughter interested in eating but she still has little appetite. I eat my own dinner while nursing her at the table.

6:25pm — My partner is ready to go on his trip. We get up and say goodbyes with a big family hug.

6:35pm — Partner out the door, daughter watches his truck drive out the driveway. I clean up my dinner plate and do dishes.

6:45pm — Daughter wants to watch a TV show, which we only do when she's sick. I say yes and set up the iPad for her. I finish dishes while show starts.

6:55pm — Bring daughter's now cool dinner over to her, and she finally eats while watching her show.

7:15pm — Show is over. She brings her plate to the sink while I grab iPad and several books for bedtime.

7:20pm — We both brush teeth and wash hands and faces, then get into pajamas and into bed. We read six books while daughter nurses off and on. Continue to nurse off and on.

7:55pm — Daughter falls asleep. I am so tired that I stay in bed and read the news, scroll Instagram, and text with my partner on my iPad.

8:35pm — Put my iPad down and fall asleep.

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5:30–6:00am—We are staying at my husband's mother and stepfather's house in New Jersey so we can spend time with his grandmother, who is visiting from Cleveland. I love this house, but there are windows near the ceiling that let in the sun the moment it rises. I put my head under a blanket to try to keep sleeping. I brought a sleep mask but can never really sleep with it on.

6:55am—Our two-year-old calls for mama but keeps sleeping.

7:05am—I get out of bed, put on a bra, and head out to the kitchen where I drink a delicious coffee and hang

out with my mother-in-law as she tries to get a water stain off her cabinet.

7:30am—The toddler wakes up. We perform a complicated maneuver where my husband and I move her—recently toilet trained—mid-poop to her travel potty so her 101-year-old great-grandmother can use the bathroom. She usually still nurses in morning but hasn't asked since we've been staying here so I don't mention it.

8:00am—We eat breakfast, cooked by my mother-in-law, pack up the hundreds of bags we brought for our three-day-weekend, and load the car.

9:00am—We say goodbye, which is bittersweet, and head out to Sesame Place, a trip we planned to capitalize on how much closer to it my mother-in-law's is than our apartment in Queens.

10:00am—The toddler screams, "We made it!!!" We use bathrooms, apply sunscreen, wait in the first of many lines, and she finally boards a carousel by 11. I get very motion sick so her dad rides the rides with her while I wave and take pictures. She is surprisingly chill about waiting in all the lines.

11:10am—We immediately cave and buy her a stuffed Cookie Monster rather than waiting for the end of the day (She wants a Zoe doll in the moment but we convinced her to stick to the plan, which has always been Cookie).

11:30am—I am the one who wants a snack first.

12:00pm—We eat the very random foods we packed for lunch and finish just in time to see the special “Sesame Street” musical performance. The toddler is in awe.

1:00pm—We pace back and forth with the resistant toddler trying to get a stroller nap. Eventually she falls asleep for about twenty-thirty minutes. She usually naps for around two hours, which we knew wouldn’t happen today, but this short of a nap doesn’t bode especially well for the rest of the day.

2:00pm—The toddler notices a giant rubber duck atop the tallest water ride and is desperate to get close to him. We don’t believe it, but she’s game for the ride so we do it. It’s a little terrifying, but mostly fun. We get done just in time to watch the parade, which blows her little mind.

3:45pm—The toddler is very fussy. No nap! Ice cream fails to really cheer her up. She doesn’t want to do anything except the two water rides that are closed because someone pooped in them. Throws a fit. We watch the “Sesame Street” show for the second time and then another show, which was great. We sit for some snacks we packed and Bert and Ernie and Zoe magically appear to take photos, give hugs and save the day.

5:00pm—We get in line for the last water ride we can go on and the toddler has a tantrum because the one tube that’s safe for her to go on is orange and not pink,

so we have to back track off the line with giant rubber floats. Then we hit the little wave pool and have a blast; the day is saved again. All the food options are closed by the time we drag ourselves away so we wind up at a Taco Bell at 7:30pm, the toddler’s usual bedtime. She’s never had fast food before. I order her a bean burrito but she mostly eats her dad’s crunchy beef taco. As soon as we load into the car I discover that the reason no one has updated me about the outdoor class we’re taking tomorrow is my registration never went through. As I deal with that and my husband tries to fix the car sound system to play the toddler’s music class songs, still in the Taco Bell parking lot, the toddler announces she has to poop. Rather than haul back inside we set her up with the travel potty next to the car. She does not in fact poop, but prolongs our departure by a good twenty minutes.

8:20–9:25pm—The toddler talks nonstop despite best efforts to get her to sleep in the car. She is sooo amped up. She finally agrees to put on her new sleep mask bought for this purpose and after she fiddles with it for a few, it winds up working and she finally falls asleep.

10:00pm—We return home and transfer the sleeping toddler to her crib. This rarely is successful but tonight it sticks.

10:05pm—I unpack the five packages of gluten free bread my mother-in-law and her sister got for my husband for the two days we were out in New Jersey

and all the rest of our gear, then send many work emails I haven't written over the past three days. I pack a bag for our outdoor class tomorrow morning, crossing my fingers I haven't missed any important messages telling us what to bring for our first day. I gather an assortment of goods for tomorrow evening, when three girlfriends and I will hold our annual Regiftmas in July dinner, where we trade gifts others have given us that we don't want. We used to do it just after the holidays, which made a lot of sense, but our schedules are so crazy that we wound up pushing last year's dinner back so many times it finally happened in July. I suddenly remember to rescue the air plants I accidentally left submerged in water when we left for the long weekend—they seem fine. I'm supposed to water a neighbor's plants today but I think they'll live until tomorrow.

11:00pm—I drink a million glasses of water and get ready for bed.

11:15pm—I climb into bed for a few minutes of mindless TV, but wind up reading about the horrible things the president tweeted while we were on “Sesame Street” before forcing myself to put down the phone and go to sleep.

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5.58am – Wake and check phone for news. Lie in bed thinking of what needs to be done today.

6.30am – Am nervous about today's workload so get up for shower and make coffee. Sort emails. I enjoy the quiet house before anyone else wakes. Put cheesy '70s music on. Eat yoghurt.

7.35am – Wake up 9yo ('E'). It's the school holidays but we need to get ready to pick up her 12 year old brother ('C') from the airport where he's flying in after a week in Wellington. I forgot to give E a bath last night so I run the bath now. I create social media posts for work while she's in the bath. I wash her hair and send more emails.

8.05am – I check my phone. 13 missed calls from Wellington. Problems with C's flight. He's now not coming home today. I rearrange my morning schedule and get E out of the bath.

8.15am – I put on moisturizer, foundation, mascara and blush. Pack bag. Drive E to my Mum's house. Realize she didn't have breakfast as I drive into work.

8.34am – Arrive at work for meetings and usual tasks.

12.30pm – Mum drops E off to my work. She plays on her device while I work for the next two hours. I add that to the Device Guilt in my brain.

2.30pm – We leave work. I take my laptop and files with me so I can continue at home. I didn't have time for lunch.

2.45pm – Pick up a nationwide photography magazine on the way home. One of my photos features shortlisted in their annual competition's nature category. Mixed feelings as I head home—I generally don't do nature photography so I feel weirdly frustrated by it.

3pm – Husband gets home at the same time as me and E.

3.12pm – Call from C in Wellington. He’s now coming home on Wednesday. We all miss him. I sit at my computer. My office is in our lounge. I keep working.

4.30pm – E reminds me it’s art lesson time. She announced last term that she’d be running art classes in the holidays and I signed up. We walk around the house, each of us drawing an item in each room. We have to guess what each other has sketched. In C’s room we both draw his shoes. Lots of laughing. She’s a pretty good teacher.

5.10pm – My husband asks what we need from the shops. Bread, carrots, apples, corn, ham.

5.15pm – While the shopping’s getting done, I start post production on three photos I made at my city’s main sports stadium yesterday. It’s being demolished after severe earthquake damage in 2011. The demolition makes for some interesting composition.

5.45pm – I’m not on dinner duty tonight. It’s toasted sandwich night. I keep on with the post production. The light was a bit dull on the day I made the photos so I work on them in black and white. They tell an interesting story.

6.10pm – We all eat in front of the television watching a series about glass blowing.

6.40pm – I have a glass of wine. I can’t stop watching the glass blowing. I spend a long time thinking whether an accident-prone person such as myself should try it. It’s hypnotic to watch. I should clean the kitchen, but glass blowing is much more interesting.

8.37pm – I drag myself to the computer. I have to research an article I’m writing on landscape photography in New Zealand.

9pm – My husband puts E to bed. She comes and gives me a squeeze hug of the best kind.

10.06pm – I’m too tired to concentrate anymore— I head to bed.

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12–2am Wake a couple of times, it’s full moon, I often feel my mother at this time—she passed away 9 full moons ago. I put a sleep sack onto my sleeping toddler.

6.30am I’m woken by S, 2 years old. She clambers from her floor mattress in my room onto the bed, somewhat hampered by still wearing the sleep sack, and says, “Boobies.” We do breastfeeding for a few minutes then doze together before getting up to see her dad. He’s walking the dogs but once he gets back I get some time out as he and S have breakfast together. I do the Body Truth CD from my FertileHeart practice and get dressed just in time to take over when he leaves for work at 8am.

8.15am My friend arrives and leaves her toddler, O, with me for the morning as she has a scan appointment for baby number 2. I feel a little envious but am happy to help. They have milk and cereal, a second breakfast for both of them and I have some muesli. We read stories,

all 3 of us bunched up on S's tiny toddler bed in her room. Suddenly I realize it's time to go, so rush around preparing a bag with snacks, water, nappies, etc. My friend's husband has fixed a car seat into the car so I can take both toddlers out.

10.07am We arrive at the toddler group, last session before the holidays so it's a party. They play, they make bunting. We adults have a tea and keep the sharing good, then it's snack time with special party treats including those horrid sausages and white bread cheese and ham sandwiches. Finally we sing nursery rhymes, then the highlight for S, we do the "Hokey Cokey." They are both pleased to get a sticker book to take home.

11.46am I drive back from the party, which went in a flash and drop O back home to his mum. I like the way it feels to have 2 kids together in the back of the car.

12.17pm When I get home S is asleep in her car seat and usually I'd take her inside but I have to leave for a hospital appointment at 1.30pm so I decide to leave her napping there. For a while I cut back the foliage on the drive, which I've been meaning to do for months, this way I can monitor her sleeping in the car.

12.25pm I finally go into the house and rush around clearing up mess, putting washing on and because S is in the car on the drive I keep popping out to check on her. Finally stop for some lunch myself, I'm feeling quite stressed, this is quite a busy day for me and I prefer

when we can drift from one thing to another without so many time commitments. I go into the back garden and replenish the dogs' water bowl before leaving the house again. It's a really hot day.

1.15pm S is still asleep in the car, which is perfect as I can drive her back to my friend's place where she then wakes up perfectly on cue. She loves it there so is happy for me to leave her and I head off to my hospital appointment.

2.40pm I leave the hospital after a short meeting with a midwife in the Reflections Team. I'm there to find out exactly what went on in my daughter's C-Section birth as I know I lost a lot of blood and I also had an allergy to one of the medications, but I want more information as I'm thinking of having another child. I'm 53 years old, so I want to check I could physically take another C-section if it became necessary. I get back to my friend's house and we spend a couple of hours talking and playing with our toddlers and a third friend joins us with her toddler. We all met at prenatal yoga and despite I'm much older than them we have a great friendship / support group along with 5 others.

4.26pm My phone goes, it's the midwife with a consultant appointment date to confirm what she and I discussed and get his view. It's great service from the UK's NHS and I'm pleasantly surprised at the lack of ageism and speed of appointment.

5.15pm S and I get home, I stick some pasta and veg on the hob for S, grab a cup of tea and a rice cake. I'm trying to cut down on sugary treats. S watches "Postman Pat" on the TV whilst I clear up the kitchen from earlier and get dinner ready.

6.05pm My partner arrives home from work and we all sit in the garden whilst S eats and we have a drink and some olives. I finally eat a half hour later whilst he reads to S, part of her wind down before bed.

7.25pm S does a poo so my partner thinks this a good time to hand her over to me and I take her upstairs for a wash, teeth clean and bed. No bath tonight.

8.15pm S is still not asleep. She has been staying awake until 9pm these past 2 nights and it looks like it's happening again. I find it frustrating as I'd like to get on with some stuff for myself in the evenings. I have no childcare in place yet including no relatives to give me time off so the evening time is quite precious. I rarely get any. S says she wants a poo but is still in nappies, refusing to potty train, but I take her to the toilet as requested. No poo.

8.22pm We lie down again together. S is disappointed I can't do boobies all the time, the milk is less and less and I feel the time is coming to a stop. We have a chat about boobie milk, I'm aware that S has to learn a different way to fall asleep rather than on the breast. I say that we can cuddle instead and she says, "Mummy

help you," (meaning, Mummy will help me) and it totally melts me. I feel so humbled to be her mother and so incredibly lucky to have her in my life.

8.50pm Swap with my partner who's returned from taking out the dogs and just finished his dinner. S cries for me. But I have things to do, I eat some ice cream, do some research for a job interview tomorrow and he stays with her until she settles.

9.44pm I'm really tired. I've emailed estate agents, prepped for the interview and spent time with the dogs. It's a huge full moon, which makes me emotional about my mother's passing last year again. I feel that I have no time to honor these moments. My partner has gone to bed with a book already.

10.21pm I'm still finding jobs that need doing. I feed the cats, water the plants, I spend a few moments with my partner and then head up to my room. I then spend another hour or so getting pulled into social media, checking posts on Older Mums and TTC (trying to conceive) groups on FaceBook. It helps me to feel a little supported on my journey. I'm a typical creative—I find it hard to go to bed early even now.

11.27pm I put a sleep sack on to S and after doing another FertileHeart imagery for "Meeting your Child Halfway," I lie down and go to sleep.

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Sometime after midnight: Multiple wakings. Enduring insomnia related to current crisis.

Starting with every shift and creak of the floorboards overhead: Is that movement? Is she up? Ok?
 Unauthorized exercise under the cover of night?
 What might her heart be doing?

Anxious dreams, verging on nightmare: my children in the dark screaming for me, but I have no voice to call back.

Another night of random night sweats. Possibly related to medication / hormones / stress. Wide-eyed in the dark regretting wine, but also realistic about just coping at the moment.

5:30am: Wake. Take medication. Make cup of tea, stoke fire, let dogs out. Turn on phone, check emails, look at ABC News, resist spiraling into Instagram where everyone is living their best life in much more impressive ways than I can ever achieve.

5:45am: Husband gets up, makes his breakfast, eats. Goes out to do his rounds—checks whether goats have started birthing, lets ducks out, feeds chooks.

6:00am: Open children's doors to ease them out of school holiday slumber. (As typical, school holidays have involved complex logistical planning—days, weeks in advance of today.) Put dishes away, empty coffee grounds on garden, put more coffee on. Take hot water off fire for breakfast dishes.

6:30am: Youngest daughter (7) rises, cheerful today. Anticipating a play-over at a friend's place. Requests Vegemite on toasted Turkish bread for breakfast. Middle daughter (11) rises, walks into door. Direct her back to bed, "You don't need to get up yet. Just walk down to Nanny and Poppa's when you've had enough sleep."

6:45am: Oldest daughter (16) is finally roused, tension gathering her face. After our (now regular) routine of prompting / pleasing / urging, she arrives at Greek yogurt and muesli for breakfast. She protests the extra almonds, whimpers over the juice. Repeat (now familiar) pep-talk about, "Weigh in and medical assessment on Thursday," and, "Not returning to forcible admission with naso-gastric tube."

7:00am: After panic about him finally running away, Son (15) is discovered on youngest daughter's top bunk. He reluctantly drags himself through preparation for a day working. Dishes done, rolling clean-up ongoing, washing rearranged around fire, coffee hissing. Sit briefly for coffee and two slices of sourdough—one with Vegemite, one marmalade.

7:30am: Oldest daughter still agonizing through breakfast. Offer more words of encouragement. Prepare food for her to take for supervised morning tea and lunch with Grandma. Prepare own lunch for work. Bag up some snacks for youngest daughter to take to her play-over.

7:45am: Oldest daughter finally finishes meal. “Another meal closer to being nourished and well,” I say (or think). Brush teeth, short shower to conserve hot (rain) water. Dress, make bed.

8:00am: Youngest daughter requires none of the customary cajoling (yelling) to get her into the car. “I’m so excited, mum!” Drive through fog and rain, deep into the hills. Think how apt the bleak, heavy skies, the mist settled amid the tangled scrub—outside mirroring my interior landscape.

8:15am: Arrive at youngest daughter’s friend’s house. The mother comes out, still creased and warm with sleep. Youngest skips off inside, waving over her shoulder. The mother asks after “sick daughter” and I sketch out the story. Drizzle sparks on her hair as she shakes her head and hugs me.

8:30am: Feel buoyed by generosity on drive to work. Will be an hour later than I usually like.

9:00am: Arrive at Community Health. No bays left, so park illegally on verge. Brace myself for more family-crisis-related queries and chat. Such support and kindness from co-workers, feel lifted again. Discuss colleague—also a precious friend—who has just had a double mastectomy. We both look to the window, to the sky for a bit.

9:15am: Turn on heater and set up room for first family, new to the service. Arrange assortment of toys and

activities which may start to indicate specifics of this little person’s difficulties.

9:40am: First family have still not arrived. Check the team’s mobile. Sure enough, a text, apologizing for late notice need to reschedule.

10:00am: Make a rooibos tea and settle in to check emails. This inevitably leads in multiple directions, case co-ordinating for a handful of children with high and complex needs.

11:00am(ish): Leave multiple tasks hanging. Start a report to funding body for children with disability. Agonize over each word, aware that the child and his twin brother have significant issues which require increased funding. Quash instinct to write something about their strengths and quirks and hilarity. Write in formula noting multiple deficits and “impact on function.”

12:00pm(ish): Receive photo from oldest daughter documenting progress with food under grandma’s watch.

1:00pm: Take lunch break to do family shopping. Buy a new clotheshorse on a whim.

2:00pm(ish): Time dragging on reports, admin, snacking. Ludicrous amount of tea drunk in attempt to stay warm within concrete walls. Message from oldest: grandma told me to hurry up during lunch. Walk self around depressingly neglected government building to dissipate emotions over oldest and the exhaustion of

report-writing. Message from husband negotiating pickups, dinner plans.

4:00pm: Wind up work, well aware of running gear, ready in car. Outside it is drizzling and the internal battle, To run or not to run starts up:

You'll feel better.

I'm so fucked though. I ran yesterday.

You know it will make you feel better.

I'll go tomorrow. Can't I just drink wine tonight?

You're drinking too much wine.

It's a fucking tough time! Give me a fuckin' break!

It's a slippery slope....

So on and so forth, all the way to pick up youngest.

4:30pm: Nearly hit a flock of feral peacocks. Receive text message as I pull into driveway for pick-up: The girls are happily watching a movie. Feel free to grab yourself a coffee, have some time for yourself. Look from bag of running gear to windscreen, where wipers are flicking away rain. Decide on wine. Again. Feel as though healthy running self shrivels within....

4:45pm: Home. Unload shopping. Husband already busy with dinner preparation. "Still no babies," he says of goats. Oldest daughter slumped in chair, already in pajamas. Mindless scrolling on phone. Son doesn't look up from TV as I haul bags through to kitchen. He mutters, "Hello," when more insistently prompted—as if under duress. Leave shopping for dogs to nose

through. Remove bra, put on comfortable cotton clothes and support husband's efforts in kitchen.

Despite pile of high intensity interval training DVDs, resign self to no exercise today. Justify this with: "Who cares. It's holidays...." And, "I've got chronic insomnia...."

And, "It's a difficult time..." etc. Have a beer. Quickly.

Tell Husband not to judge me. Or touch me at the moment. I'm prickly and this is the way I cope.

5:00pm: My parents drop off middle daughter. They've done weaving together, which she shows me with reticence. And she's made a lemon delicious pudding. Chat with parents as we persist with dinner. Pour wine, disappointed in self. Again. Husband showers while dinner cooks. I chop broccoli, check emails.

5:45pm: Supervise dinner for oldest. She is soon overwhelmed at the table with the family. We retreat to a quieter room. I finish eating quickly and sip my wine, blurring into middle distance.

7:00pm: Watch News. Middle daughter serves her pudding. Make mistake of describing it as "rubbery" in purely descriptive terms. Back-pedal desperately in the face of her hurt. "I mean—it's meant to be! I just forgot that lemon delicious is more of a baked custard. I was expecting a self-saucing. It was just a misunderstanding, sorry love." She recovers only to have the knife plunged back in by her brother snarling, "I don't like it." Spend half an hour distracting middle out of hurt.

8:00pm(ish): Finish dishes. Fold washing, hang more. Empty recycling. Stoke fire. Husband stacks wood in readiness for tomorrow. Fine tune Tuesday's arrangement via text message—middle and youngest to my parents, son a mystery. Oldest daughter has convinced us to try a lunch date with friends. Attempt to quell her already escalating anxiety by searching for the café's menu. She settles on the tuna. I say, "You realize sashimi means raw?" "It'll be ok." I don't want to shred her efforts at confidence, but I doubt it will be "ok."

8:30pm: Rally for teeth-brushing. Do rounds of goodnight. An uneasy hush settles. Husband reads to youngest. She wants another cuddle and more reassurance about what's happening tomorrow.

8:45pm: Collapse into bed with book. Read for as long as it takes to fuzz out. Wake throughout night, worrying about the kids, about the wine I shouldn't have drunk, the exercise I should have done. Worry about my current writing project, my developing illustrations, the wisdom and momentum I gathered being on Artists' Residency in Finland, just over a month ago. At the moment, amid it all, art is simply an impossibility. Surrender to family; hopefully, to sleep.

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12:00 After a long day of travel daughter is asleep in our bed, horizontal, head in my back, feet in my husband's side. I am wide awake, I should sleep.

03:05 Daughter briefly awake. Sooth her and gently move her back to the center of the bed so I can reclaim some space.

08:15 A lie in! She wakes with a, "Mama?" and crawls on top of me. Cuddles and tickles in bed for 10 minutes.

08:25 Nappy change. She won't lie down so I pass her my hairbrush and we sing together whilst I change her bum. I love her out-of-tune humming.

08:40 Husband takes her downstairs to start on breakfast whilst I use the bathroom, I hear her insist on taking the stairs by herself.

08:50 I make coffee and entertain her whilst breakfast is being made. We play with a take-out coffee cup and a wooden spoon.

09:00 Breakfast is ready, but there is no high chair at this holiday let so I sit at the breakfast bar with her on my lap. We eat whilst husband showers and then leaves to return hire car. The car needs to be in Glasgow by midday, we are in Edinburgh.

09:30 Still sat at breakfast bench, she refuses to drink water from her sippy-cup. I pour some into a regular cup, she's happy with that.

09:40 Rest of the family (aunty, uncle, cousins) start to wake. I set her down and clear away the mess whilst her cousins entertain her.

10:00 Whilst unloading the dishwasher she brings me a rubber duck, a small pillow, a pen, two hair clips, a tea towel and one shoe. I return all the things to their original places.

10:30 I follow the sound of “Mama” and find her sat in her cousin’s empty suitcase. She’s pooing.

10:35 Take her up to the bathroom to change her nappy and then try to leave her with her aunty so I can shower.

10:40 After a very short sit down protest on my towel she happily toddles off with aunty and lets me shower.

11:15 Husband still not back and everyone else is getting ready to leave for a city bus tour. I decide to stay put for her nap.

11:30 Face time with grandma, she shows daughter the chickens in the back garden. I’m still in my towel.

11:45 I get dressed and put on make-up whilst she watches cartoons.

12:05 Husband returns! She is very excited. Decide to walk around the block and grab a coffee in the hopes that she will fall asleep in the carrier. It works.

12:20 Lay her down on the sofa and open the living room window. It’s a beautiful sunny day. Grab my book and sit down to read.

13:35 “Mama!” She wakes, climbs down from the sofa and toddles over to my seat by the window and manages to climb up. Make note to self; don’t leave the chair by the open window. She eats a banana.

13:50 We head out to meet the rest of the family for lunch. Shut the front door and realize she had pooped again so go back up the four flights of stairs to change her nappy. She is a little disgruntled about having to put her shoes back on.

14:30 Speedy walk to lunch place. I’m sweating. The rest of the family has already sat down to food. Daughter discovers straws. She uses 3 to drink from her cousins water cup.

14:45 Our food arrives and the rest of the family decides to leave for the next destination with the plan that we meet them there. Cousins take a few selfies with daughter and then they leave.

15:30 I pay for the food, pick some noodles of the floor and we leave the café. Husband takes daughter on his shoulders.

15:35 Daughter wants to walk.

15:50 I say, "You are walking so well darling," and she sits down on the pavement. A man sitting on a bench giggles and shouts, "You spoke too soon!" I pick her up.

16:10 We arrive at the art gallery. I pay to see the show (Bridget Riley) and husband takes daughter to meet others in the free bit. I have 40 minutes before the gallery shuts, I'm excited about my childfree linger over art time.

17:00 Meet others outside of the gallery, swap bag for daughter.

17:15 We stop for a tea and cake on the way back to the apartment. I amuse daughter with a pencil and the exhibition plan. I try to encourage some Bridget Riley structure to our doodles. I fail.

18:00 Preparations are underway for more family to join us this evening for dinner. I make dinner for kids; pasta with tomato sauce. There is much discussion about when to add cheese.

18:20 I walk into the living room and take a shot glass out of daughter's hand and encourage them all to sit down.

18:30 I enjoy watching her think she is involved in all the kid conversations at the dinner table. Don't enjoy the tomato sauce hands over my t-shirt.

19:05 Family start arriving whilst I'm chasing her with a flannel. I decide to let her run around in her nappy.

20:00 I move snacks to the bigger table to stop daughter from eating all the crisps and take another glass from her little hands.

21:10 I run a bath and five family members "help" me bathe her.

21:25 I dress her for bed whilst husband makes up a milk. She's not keen on having her hair brushed.

21:35 Everyone leaves to get ice-cream and I stay to put her to bed. She's so tired so she goes to sleep quickly.

21:50 Sit down on the sofa with a glass of wine and put on a film, "The Wife" with Glenn Close.

22:30 Family return with treats.

23:30 Bedtime. A lovely day spent five steps behind everyone else and barely one step in front of my daughter.

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12:03: L cries in her bed.

12:05: I breastfeed L in my bed.

1:04: R. cries because of mosquitos bite.

1:05: I go to R's bed.

1:15: L cries.

1:16: I ask dad to care for R while I breastfeed L.

4:00: L cries, I breastfeed.

6:30: Dad's alarm rang, I close it because he is sleeping in R's bed.

8:20: L wakes up.

8:30: I fill the laundry bag and ask dad to bring it downstairs for me.

8:31: I say good morning to my mom and my son.

8:33: I change L's diaper.

8:34: L poops.

8:35: I change L's diaper.

8:40: I hang the wet clothes outside.

8:52: My mom teaches me how to use the new coffee machine.

9:00: My dad comes back home from jogging.

9:08: We breakfast, I eat an egg.

9:30: I go to the toilet.

9:45: I breastfeed L.

9:50: We prepare for the beach.

10:10: I fill my pinhole camera with film, dad takes pictures of the kids outside.

10:18: I seek the beach bag.

10:20: I choose another bag.

10:25: I finish the preparations for the beach.

10:36: My son cries because he lost something.

10:37: I seek the things for my son.

10:38: I find the lost things.

10:39: We fill the car, fasten the child seatbelts.

10:40: We leave the farmhouse.

10:42: We listen the favorite song of R in the car.

10:46: We listen the favorite song of R again.

10:50: We listen the favorite song of R again.

10:54: We listen the favorite song of R again.

11:00: R is ok with a new song.

11:20: We arrive.

11:22: We unpacked the car.

11:30: We chose the perfect spot and install the tent.

11:31: Time stop.

4:00: We decide to move back home and leave our perfect spot.

4:12: We are in the car.

4:13: We listen the favorite songs of R.

4:15: L and R fall asleep.

4:25: We stop at the farmer market. I buy peas, strawberries, cucumber and donuts. Dad buys a pecan pie.

4:56: We're back at the farmhouse. L and R wake up.

5:00: I took lettuce from the garden. L plays with the leaves. R plays with the iPad.

5:15: L cries, I breastfeed her.

5:40: I fill a glass of white wine.

5:46: My mother calls. She bought salmon for tomorrow.

5:52: I take in the dried clothes from outside.

6:10: I change L's diapers.

6:26: Children play inside the kitchen cabinet, dad makes a Caesar salad, I make spaghetti. I refill my glass of wine.

6:48: My mother and my dad are back from the grocery store.

7:00: We eat the dinner.

7:35: We clean the dishes.

7:42: I take a shower with L upstairs. My mom gives R bath downstairs.

8:11: I breastfeed L. She falls asleep. My mother reads R a book. My husband and my dad have a coffee outside.

8:15: I give a fingers and toes massage to R.

8:30: I answer R's questions about life mysteries.

8:45: I am downstairs, drinking another glass of wine playing cards in a team with my mom against my dad and my husband. We win.

11:00: I go to bed, I read 5 pages of my book and fall asleep.

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4:00 a.m. – Wake up, brush teeth, climb back into bed with A.

4:30 a.m. – Rise, make bed, help A. pack water for work.

4:40 a.m. – Make coffee, load laundry, take meds.

5:00 a.m. – Read (from *Silences: Lectures and Writings* by John Cage and take notes, write paraphrases of “Composition as Process: Part II”).

5:30 a.m. – Revise poem from new manuscript.

6:15 a.m. – Write & edit blog post about last week’s

“Artist Residency in Motherhood” with M.S.

7:00 a.m. – Feed dogs; dress to go on walk with puppy.

7:15 a.m. – Greet N. & J. (just woke up).

7:20 a.m. – Let dogs out in backyard.

7:40 a.m. – Answer phone call from A.; try to make him feel better about eBay bid.

7:45 a.m. – Puppy escapes yard via compost heap; hang up with A.

7:55 a.m. – Put dogs inside, call A. back.

8:00 a.m. – See eBay bid, freak out (a little, internal).

8:05 a.m. – Walk 70 lb. hound puppy 2.38 miles (this dog will be the end of my knees and back).

9:00 a.m. – Return home; yell at kids (J., L.) for being on my laptop.

9:05 a.m. – Do dishes from last night; make breakfast (oatmeal).

9:30 a.m. – Eat breakfast, research electric fences.

10:00 a.m. – Social media (Facebook, Twitter): check messages, reply; check email, reply.

10:20 a.m. – Yard work.

10:45 a.m. – Idiot puppy escapes again; chase through neighbor’s yard (again).

10:50 a.m. – Put puppy in crate; resume yard work.

11:25 a.m. – Find L. watching Netflix on phone instead of doing chores.

11:30 a.m. – Increase Downtime Restrictions on L’s phone.

11:35 a.m. – Put Downtime Restrictions on my own phone.

11:40 a.m. – Housekeeping (tidying, straightening, vacuuming).

12:00 p.m. – Ask kids to make themselves lunch & prepare for pool party.

12:15 p.m. – Remind kids to eat & pack for pool party.
 12:30 p.m. – Grill veggie burger for myself; bring to eat in car.
 12:50 p.m. – Buy crudités at grocery for pool party.
 1:10 p.m. – Arrive late to pool party.
 3:00 p.m. – Leave kids with other moms at pool party.
 3:15 p.m. – Stop by house; let out dogs to pee; brush teeth.
 3:30 p.m. – Arrive at dentist’s office, have filling replaced.
 4:07 p.m. – Pick up kids from pool party.
 4:30 p.m. – Arrive home; talk to A.; find puppy trying to escape again; help reinforce wire fence with zip ties.
 5:40 p.m. – Find out Aunt Patti passed away from second stroke.
 6:00 p.m. – Say goodbye and goodnight to L. (spending night at M.’s).
 6:15 p.m. – Return to grocery, buy ice cream and candy for J.’s sleepover.
 6:30 p.m. – Drop J. off at sleepover.
 6:45 p.m. – Pick up fast food (Wendy’s) for dinner.
 7:00 p.m. – Eat dinner; watch “Deadpool 2” (again) with A.
 8:30 p.m. – Do dishes; prepare N. for bed.
 9:00 p.m. – Put N. to bed; wash face, dress for bed.
 9:05 p.m. – Call parents (discuss Aunt Patti, arrangements, kids, escaping puppy).
 10:30 p.m. – Get into bed, think about reading, sleep instead.

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12:10 am Wake up to newborn rustling, adjust her position and pat her back until she falls asleep.
 12:18 am Newborn wakes up again, rock bassinet and go to bathroom.
 12:21 am Newborn rustling again. I check on her and am a little annoyed since it’s only been two hours since we fell asleep.
 1:58 am Wake up to louder newborn complaints. Change her diaper while and am amazed it’s been over an hour—feel very unrested. Nurse newborn.
 2:18 am Newborn needs another change, right as she begins to fall back asleep. Offer newborn breast. She begins to fall asleep on lap without drinking. Pass time on phone until she’s asleep enough to move.
 2:27 am Move newborn to bassinet. Pat her back until she closes her eyes. Wonder if she ate enough. Wonder about milk supply.
 2:29 am Newborn wakes. More back patting. Watch newborn to ensure she’s really asleep.
 2:33 am Newborn moves around again. Watch to see if she’ll settle on her own. Feel exhausted. Think this is just how the night is going to go. Feel disappointed that I am not likely to get any deep sleep.

2:37 am I turn off light, settle back into bed, hope for four hours of sleep.

5:13 am Wake to newborn complaints. Check her diaper. Offer her breast.

5:22 am Newborn finally latches. I hope she eats well as breasts feel uncomfortably full. Feel exhausted. Think it may be a rough day.

5:36 am Burp newborn. She only eats on one side. Hold her until she settles.

5:39 am Move her to bassinet. Wait for her to settle. Watch fire engine go by with siren muted. Hear toddler breathing on monitor and worry she is going to wake soon. Ignore my hunger. Think about whether to go to bathroom or wait and sleep instead.

5:42 am Decide to lay down to sleep, unsure if it will come. Newborn moves and grunts, pat her.

6:40 am Newborn continues to grunt and wiggle. Every time I pick her up she quiets down briefly. Still tired but my head is pounding less.

6:44 am Go to bathroom. Newborn's eyes are open. Change her diaper. Enjoy a few baby smiles. Offer her breast.

6:52 am Newborn finally latches. I begin to leak on other side.

7:02 am Newborn falls asleep. I contemplate taking a shower.

7:08 am Decide to put newborn in bassinet and try to shower. She wakes up, wait for her to settle again.

7:14 am Toddler wakes up and climbs into our bed. Newborn wakes up. We cuddle as a family of four. Toddler prompts conversation about gender and skin color, I wonder how much to say.

7:30 am Husband takes toddler potty and then to play with grandmother who is visiting. I change newborns diaper.

7:34 am Nurse newborn. Feel calm and happy despite lack of sleep.

7:49 am Newborn falls asleep. Burp her. Offer her other breast. Feel bored and sick of staring at my phone.

8:00 am Newborn falls asleep. Burp her. She falls back asleep against me. I look at and touch her.

8:10 am Move newborn to bassinet. Pat her back. She wakes up anyway. Get newborn dressed and change her diaper. Take photos of how she falls asleep on changing table.

8:17 am Gather things and baby to take downstairs. Leave her in swing with grandma/husband supervision.

8:20 am Make bed, pick up toddlers room. Fill laundry basket.

8:24 am Shower. Survey changes in postpartum body. Thoughts glide between judgmental discomfort and grateful amazement. Note hunger. Remember I need to start slow cooker meal. Realize I bought too few onions for the week. Make note to buy more tomorrow.

8:41 am Exit shower. Note absence of crying baby sounds. Dress and finish getting ready.

8:54 am Go downstairs. Note baby asleep in swing, feel slight guilt at her always being in swing but realize she's okay. Note toddler sitting to eat breakfast. Feed dog and prepare my own meal. Eat breakfast. Talk to husband and grandma.

9:27 am Clean up from breakfast, run dishwasher and prepare dinner for slow cooker while grandma plays with toddler.

9:37 am Prompt grandma and toddler to brush teeth and get dressed. Continue prepping dinner. Take out tomorrow's dinner to defrost.

9:52 am Review week's to do list. Start laundry. Talk to husband.

10:01 am Newborn wakes. Change diaper twice. Discuss playground plans with family. Decide to stay home with newborn. Mixed feelings—I want the relative quiet alone time of staying with baby but I also feel left out from family outdoor fun.

10:11 am Nurse newborn. Feel amazed at how quiet my house is. Mentally prepare for tomorrow's schedule in order to get to appointment on time. Wonder if I'll find time to pump today.

10:24 am Burp baby, switch breasts. Silently look out window. Check email. Reflect on this past pregnancy, wonder if it is my last.

10:44 am Burp baby. Hold her against me so she can fall back asleep. Check online women's group posts.

10:55 am Newborn wakes fussy. I'm disappointed she woke up. Change her diaper. Switch laundry. Feel tired and maybe hungry again.

11:09 am Soothe baby. Try tummy time. Soothe baby. Put her in carrier. Text mom friend for support. Check mail. Eat a snack while admiring my garden from windows.

11:25 am Baby falls asleep in carrier. Feel grateful. Take time to journal.

11:40 am Newborn stirs. Rock her back to sleep.

11:46 am Transfer newborn to bed. See that rest of family is almost home so prep lunch.

12:01 pm Give toddler lunch. Check laundry. Make my lunch.

12:13 pm Eat lunch.

12:32 pm Help clean up lunch. Baby stirring. Check on toddler and grandma.

12:37 pm Fold laundry. Empty dishwasher.

12:55 pm Go outside to water flowers with toddler.

1:15 pm Grandma brings crying newborn out. I take baby to nurse her. Start watching art video on my phone.

1:39 pm Newborn falls asleep, burp her and lay with her until she's settled.

1:47 pm Newborn wakes up again; change her diaper; rock with her as I check on toddler and grandma.

1:55 pm Leave newborn with husband and start nap time routine with toddler.

2:05 pm Husband brings in crying baby. Finish nap time routine with fussy newborn and toddler who wants time with just mom.

2:27 pm Leave toddler still awake and take baby to be fed. Change newborn diaper. Feel tired and harried.

2:34 pm Nurse baby. Check toddler on monitor—grateful she seems to be falling asleep. Feel guilty I can't manage one bedtime routine without newborn interrupting. Feel guilty I haven't focused on talking to newborn much today. Exhale these feelings because they are both doing fine.

2:39 pm Feel frustrated that baby keeps letting go of latch.

2:42 pm Newborn and I settle, toddler is asleep, watch more of the art video.

2:47 pm Newborn fusses, burp and cuddle her.

2:53 pm Newborn doesn't seem to want to eat, still fussy, put her in carrier for a walk around the house and song.

3:05 pm Newborn falls asleep.

3:16 pm Move newborn to bed. Have a snack while watching art video.

3:39 pm Newborn wakes up, cuddle and talk time. Change her diaper.

3:56 pm Nurse baby; watch more of art video.

4:25 pm Sit with baby and grandma talking.

4:38 pm Wake up toddler, do potty time and trim her nails. Cuddle time with toddler.

5:00 pm Baby begins to fuss; nurse baby.

5:11 pm Baby fusses on breast; have her take a break. Put her in carrier for a walk outside with family.

5:40 pm Feed dog and help prep dinner.

6:20 pm Eat dinner with family.

6:40 pm Newborn wakes, change diaper, talk to her.

6:46 pm Nurse baby while spending time with family.

7:15 pm Soothe fussy baby, change her diaper.

7:30 pm Start bath time with toddler.

7:50 pm Baby fusses, change her diaper and nurse her while talking to grandma.

8:10 pm Baby fusses, try swaying cuddles. Say good night to toddler.

8:26 pm Nurse baby.

8:39 pm Newborn falling asleep. Watch toddler still awake in room on the monitor.

8:45 pm Move newborn to bed. Have a snack and journal.

8:55 pm Newborn stirring on monitor. Change her diaper. Get ready for bed with awake baby nearby. Check that toddler is asleep on monitor.

9:19 pm Nurse newborn, finish watching art video.

9:40 pm Move newborn to bassinet; tuck in toddler last time. Write memories of day in their journals.

9:53 pm Feel physically tired and desire time alone, but content. Turn off light and try to sleep.

11:35 pm Baby stirring wakes me up; change babies diaper; offer breast: change diaper again.

11:48 pm Offer breast again; she is disinterested.

I'm annoyed and disappointed to be awake so soon. Newborn falling back to sleep on her own.

11:54 pm Baby wakes up; still uninterested in breast; tries to fall back asleep on own.

11:58 pm Move baby to bassinet; pat her back and hope she stays asleep.

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12:03am Finally turn off Twitter and try to go to sleep.

12:05 Power turns back on along with the light I forgot was on. Turn off lights, go to sleep.

6:00 B up early, let him crawl into bed. Snuggle for a bit.

6:20 B talking, missing V.

6:35 B kicking, I give a warning.

6:38 B kicks again, I walk him back to his room, he comes back to the door, pounding to let him in to snuggle.

6:50 Get up to get M. B races in to the room and pulls her hand off the crib railing. Kitchen for breakfast.

Bottle for M, blackberries for B. I unload dishwasher.

B "feeds" me his play food and I feed M yogurt and oatmeal.

7:35 Convince B to have some oatmeal too. He finishes and runs to play in his room. I change M's diaper, get her dressed, and B dresses himself. Bring M to her play yard. Stop B from throwing puzzle pieces, stop him

from shaking the bars of the play yard, stop him from trying to hit me, take him into his room to play.

8:00 I sit down in the kitchen to eat some pastries, make coffee. M screams at me from the play yard.

8:05 M playing happily. I finish putting away dishes.

8:06 B runs in, M starts crying. Our nanny, G, arrives, B starts asking about going to the gym. G and I start talking, B grabs V's tie, running away. I stop him, stop him from hitting.

8:20 G talks to B about the gym and playing in his room.

8:22 I finally make coffee, talk to G while she cleans the kitchen.

8:45 B comes in to ask me to come to his room. M starts crying. I go to B's room, say no to getting his baseball bat down to play with, talk about the book he tore. Bring a board book to M. She starts crying again. I sit and play with her a bit, pick her up to bring in the kitchen while I finish talking to G who is finishing cleaning.

9:00 B comes in to say he's peed. I check his floor while he's in the bathroom. No pee on the floor. I get him a new pair of underwear and pants.

9:05 B back in the living room talking about another book he tore and climbing on couch. I ask him to get down and when he doesn't, I pull him off, a little too rough. Stop him from hitting. G comes to talk to him and get him ready to go.

9:20 G loads laundry with M while B plays in his room. I finish my breakfast and get a second cup of coffee.

9:30 I make shopping list and schedule for the week while G gets kids ready. I help B with socks and shoes.

9:35 Bye to kids, take fish out of freezer, drink coffee.

9:45 Make online grocery order and list for cleaning for the week.

10:30 Check email, change laundry, put away toys, plan dinner for the week.

11:05 Text with G—no gym today. We forgot it opens late on Mondays.

11:10 Putting away books, looking for one on baby sleep. Get carried away and reorganize the bookshelves.

12pm Starving. Grab some leftovers, change laundry, check email, Instagram. Eat two bites.

12:24 Kids are back for lunch. B came in with wet pants from rain. I help him change while G gets lunch ready. Agree to eat lunch with them. Get B water while G feeds M. Eat a few more bites before helping B with the last of his lunch. I agree to read him one book before nap. G puts M down for nap. Come to B's room, ask him to help clean up before we read. He picks up two books before knocking over truck full of legos and cleaning up half. I do the rest. G comes in and finishes picking up while we read. Give B a kiss while B asking me to stay. Get the baby monitor for G. Get food and water and lock myself in my studio.

1:10 Finally finish my lunch, more Instagram.

1:30 Check Twitter, text with V.

1:50 Put on some headphones, trying to focus. Listen to music, do some journaling.

2:10 Check phone—text from G (in the kitchen)
 10 mins ago about grocery delivery trying to come
 in through the gate downstairs. Rush out to check.
 Someone in courtyard already let them in. I help G put
 away groceries. Make myself tea and big slice of pie.
 2:30 Back in studio room. See missed call from V. Try
 him back, no answer. Eat pie.
 2:37 Start music again, journal on balcony with tea.
 3:07 Research for a new piece.
 4:14 Take a break, put away dishes, play with M.
 4:25 B up, chase him around, play with M some more.
 4:34 G takes kids to play date. I make tea, meditate.
 5:15 Put music on in kitchen. Dish up dinner and set
 the table.
 5:45 Kids back, help B wash hands, eat dinner. G
 heads home.
 6:05 Finish feeding M while B plays. Make bottle.
 6:10 Read story to both, take M to her room. Change
 diaper and put her in pj's while she drinks bottle. Sing
 and rock before putting her in the crib.
 6:35 Do puzzles with B.
 7:00 B on potty, help him with pj's, and brushing teeth.
 7:22 B picks books, we read.
 7:39 FaceTime with V before bed.
 7:52 One last book. B in bed. I lay down next to him
 and sing songs. Say goodnight.
 8:11 I go to kitchen to clean up and put away dishes.
 8:13 B runs out of bed, dives into the couch. I walk him
 back to bed, close his door.

8:19 I sit down against his door, play games on my phone.
 8:23 B back out of bed, tries the door. Runs back to
 bed when it doesn't open.
 8:45 I hear B talking to himself. Can't make out what
 he's saying.
 8:53 My butt starts to fall asleep. I shift silently.
 9:09 I quietly get up and come to the kitchen, finish
 putting away dishes. Close curtains, text sister-in-law
 about when we can chat with kids.
 9:30 Watch tv shows, eat another piece of pie.

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1215 Wake up, sit up in bed turning music on very
 lightly from my phone and meditate Falun Dafa. My
 leg touches O who is sleeping in-between husband and
 I. Our doors are wide open, it begins to rain, the cool
 change is very welcome from the heat. I pull a blanket
 up over O's little legs.

0130 Husband goes to roll over I put a hand out to stop
 him reminding him O is in-between us, "Don't squash
 him," I say. He looks up and says, "Close the curtain."
 I say, "No, it is better the sun comes through in the
 morning otherwise O will sleep in." We are off to the
 mountains tomorrow when we wake. "Is that okay?"
 Husband grunts, "Yes," and we go back to sleep.

0240 O wakes up, jumps on top of me and breastfeeds,
 we both go back to sleep.

0549 O wakes again, gets some breastmilk. It's light outside. The towns clock chimes. More sleep.

0700 More clock chimes. I get up, make O's breakfast and pack his lunch box then jump back into bed and read a workbook on nutrition waiting for O to wake up while husband takes a shower.

0752 O wakes up, spider crawls backwards off the bed and plays with his aunt's suitcase wheeling it around. We read an Aussie animal book together. I feed him and read the Aussie animal book an additional 3 times over breakfast.

0836 FaceTime O's grandma in Australia. Get husband to email accommodation in the Dolomites to ask for an early check in so the bambino can get his middle of the day nap. Put on some little people music and dance and clap with O. Husband bathes O.

0930 Leave accommodation in a slightly bad mood. I'm upset at the way husband is treating sister quite mean and remind him to think about the role model he sets for O.

1000 Coffee at coffee shop and O has a soy milk in cup then chases some birds in the square. We walk into the centre, husband carries O in a hiking backpack. I realize too late I've accidentally dressed the same as O. We pick up blueberries and a pretzel and head for the bus.

1120 On the bus, it's packed. I sit next to a young boy and O kicks him over and over while I breastfeed

and try wrangle the wild O. As soon as the bus starts winding up the mountains O falls asleep looking like a little angel in my arms.

1320 We are 1800 meters up. Mountain air and clear running streams. We drag our stuff up a hill unable to find our accommodation. Husband leaves O with me and the aunt while he searches again for our place and we entertain O by letting him press the buttons of the ATM and run on top of a cement bench seat. Arrive at our accommodation. O is interested in the owners hand as he is missing a couple of fingers.

1430 Eat a light lunch in a cafe enjoying watching O waving to everyone.

1500 O climbs up and down stairs outside and gets a photo by a wooden carved dog statue with a pacifier in its mouth. We head to the local playground where O sits at the top of a slippery slide throwing a collection of 5 pine cones down the slide and laughing at the top of his voice while I collect them and he repeats around ten times. Dolomite mountains are very close and give a dramatic background to the playground.

1630 Stop at a shop to get groceries for dinner and our hike tomorrow. O is crying because he doesn't want to be in the hiking backpack. I take him out the front while husband finishes the shop and we manage to find a trolley with boxes that he stacks and un-stacks every now and then turning a box upside down to

stand up on and balance and then pushing the large trolley back and forward. O looks purposeful with his play but it wasn't enough to let me put him back in the hiking backpack so I just carry him back to our accommodation. He sings in some kind of hobbit language the whole way back.

1700 O plays in a puddle outside our accommodation stamping his feet and running his hand through it. I'm torn between letting him have fun and keeping his only pair of shoes we have brought dry but I decide to just let him enjoy and I'll dry the shoes on the heater tonight. I film it and enjoy watching him.

1730 Husband is coming down with a cold so I make ginger, lemon and honey tea. Aunt has a headache so goes for a walk around the block. I grab a plastic pasta strainer from the kitchen and give O some teabags to put in and out he also uses it as a hat. He has a breastfeed and falls asleep on me. I struggle not to doze off as I relax and read a Falun Dafa book stored in my phone called "Zhuan Falun."

1815 Cook dinner, halfway through O wakes and I breastfeed while husband stirs the food. Aunt comes home, husband gets upset at her as O wakes up hearing her arrive. I try to diffuse the situation and suggest to take it lightly, it's all good. Tension at dinner as I try to remain upbeat and positive. O eats well and then practices eating salad with a fork before playing with a

wooden dog toy his aunt gifted him from the village. I do the dishes.

2030 O gets a bath, we sing a song to brush his teeth, then he goes to the fridge and rearranges the items in there and has a suck of a half cut lemon without screwing his face up.

2155 After 3 attempts to put O to sleep where he keeps running away to play, he finally falls asleep. I'm satisfied with how large this bed is to fit us all in. Husband was upset being sick, feeling uncared for and not happy. I don't want to talk about our relationship while I breastfeed O to sleep in case an argument erupts so I suggest the morning would be better. I think about the film festival I was going to enter my film in tonight and in the comfort of the bed decide to let myself fall asleep close to my little O. I can sort that task when I wake in the later hours, the quiet time when I get most of my work done.

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12:22am : Brush teeth, pick wet towels off bathroom floor. Say goodnight to S and remind him to brush his teeth before he goes to bed.

12:26am : Climb into bed. I can hear the cat running up and down the hall.

08:05am : Alarm goes off, I press snooze.

08:15am : Alarm goes off I press snooze.

08:38am : Get out of bed. Go pee. Put kettle on to make coffee, pour some cat food in the cat's dish, fill the sink with soapy water for the dishes I should have done last night. Go back through to bedroom/living room to make my bed and turn on laptop. Put phone on charge.

09:05am : Have a shower.

09:17am : Sit in my towel and check emails. I have five email accounts to check for all the different projects I'm working on. I check them all but only answer the emails that seem urgent. Look for a podcast to listen to on my way to work.

09:45am : Get dressed. Iron a shirt from the large laundry pile sitting on the chair. Go to the kitchen to do the dishes I left soaking.

10:07am : Pack bag for work. Look for the gallery keys, drink cold coffee.

10:25am : Enter S's room to tell him I am leaving for work and ask him to get up. Remind him to tidy his room today and put a load of washing on.

10:30am : Leave the house and walk to work in the sun, listen to podcast interview with Juno Dawson, remember that I forgot to pack lunch.

11:02am : Arrive at work.

12:35pm : Text S, "Are you up yet???" No response.

13:07pm : I realize I haven't eaten yet and suddenly my stomach hurts with hunger. I put the "Back in 10 minutes" sign on the door and walk to the shop next to the gallery. I buy oatcakes, hummus and pre-sliced cheese.

13:21pm : I sit at my desk and eat, the gallery has only had one visitor so far. I check Instagram and message my friend to tell her how bored I am. She replies with a crying emoji. I continue to eat oatcakes whilst attending to admin on the computer.

15:35pm : Receive a text from S's friend's father. He tells me he caught his son with cannabis last night and has grounded him, he wants to let me know since S was with him yesterday. I put my head in my hands at my desk.

15:38pm : A woman comes in with her son who wants to touch all the sculptures and asks me what they are made of. She tells him not to touch anything and I tell him it's okay because they are made of bronze and are very heavy and difficult to break. He asks his mum if they can go to the charity shop now, she replies, "Uh no, not the charity shop, they make me sneeze ... too much dust!"

16:54pm : Start closing up the gallery to leave. Check my online banking and realize I have only £1.84 in my account. Text S to find out where he is and what he is doing. Tell him I'm coming home now via Tesco. He

replies, “I’m in the house.” Walk to Tesco and buy two bags of groceries. I pay with a credit card.

17:24pm : Walk home slowly because the bags are heavy. I listen to my Spotify playlist called “Rad Bitchez.”

18:03pm : Arrive home and dump the shopping in the kitchen, shout, “Hi,” to S. Pick up the mail from the floor in the hall and notice a Police Scotland card. “Police Scotland called on 15/7/19 at 15:00 to speak with the parent of “S” regarding enquiries.” I shout through to S to come to the kitchen. I tell him about the card and ask if he has any idea what’s going on? I tell him about the text from his friend’s dad. He says he doesn’t know anything and avoids making eye contact, he heads back to his room slamming the door. I unpack the shopping and put it away angrily. I put the beer I bought in the fridge then take one out and sit at the kitchen table to drink it even though it’s still warm.

18:25pm : S brings a load of washing through to put in the machine. I ask him what’s going on and we have a long conversation about peer pressure, alcohol, drugs, safety and the serious consequences of getting into trouble. He confides in me that he doesn’t want to loose his friends but that he feels like he always gets dragged into situations he doesn’t feel comfortable with, and he feels angry that he always gets blamed. I tell him I love him and I just want him to be safe and make good decisions. I tell him we will figure it all out.

19:15pm : I sit down on the sofa to finish my beer and check my emails. I look on Facebook.

19:30pm : Make dinner for myself and S. We sit down to eat in front of Netflix.

21:00pm : I hang up the washing and do the dishes.

21:20pm : I lie down on the sofa and watch more Netflix. S is in his room watching YouTube videos loudly, I ask him to turn the volume down on his tv.

11:33pm : Brush teeth. Say goodnight to S, reminding him to brush his teeth and get to bed soon. I get into bed and read some articles on my phone.

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F stirs next to me—she wants to nurse. I open my eyes for a moment... there’s some grey light coming through the gap in the curtains, so I lift up my shirt and let her. I drift back into sleep.

7:07 I wake up and F is latched on my right breast. I look at my phone. I lay here for a few moments thinking about the dreams I just had and that it’s Monday and I need to start writing everything down. F giggles in her sleep and then re-attaches herself to my nipple.

7:31 I attempt to extract myself from F. She’s sleeping, but my arm is under her head. No luck. She wakes and stands up, arms outstretched. I pick her up, take her into

the bathroom with me. She sits on my lap as I pee, lifting up my shirt to nurse again. I place her bottom on the sink counter as I wash my right hand, my left hand supporting her back. I lift her up and dry my hand on the towel.

S is asleep on the couch in the front room. I tell F I have to put her down for a moment so I can make coffee.

I ask her if she wants a banana. She says, "Ok." She sits on the floor eating while I prepare the coffee. I let her smell the coffee bag. I flip the switch on and start walking into the back room. She follows me down the hall with her banana and she asks for "Potter."

7:47 I put "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" on. She sits on the bed/couch and taps the empty space of mattress next to her and says, "Down," looking at me. I tell her I'll come sit with her after I get my coffee. I walk back to the front room. I write while I wait for the coffee to finish. I pull a mug that D made down from the shelf, pour, and head to the back room. I sit on the bed while F points at the owls.

8:40 F knocks over my second cup of coffee as she climbs up to sit with me.

9:01 F nurses, playing with my other nipple with her hand. We watch the quidditch match.

F sits on her potty and pees while I re-insert my menstrual cup. Afterwards, F requests another banana from the kitchen.

9:15 I make the bed, put on deodorant, brush my teeth, pull on a skirt and T-shirt.

Get F dressed, she resists.

Exchange with S is tense. I'm hangry.

9:35 Hop in car with F to get breakfast groceries.

Come home, F plays in the puddle outside our house and soaks her (new) sandals. I scoop her up and bring her inside. I give S a hug and kiss and we embrace for a while. F is rolling around on the floor, and bouncing on the green chair. I prepare eggs, smoked mackerel & sauerkraut for breakfast.

11:03 F finishes eating then nurses while we sit and watch the end of the movie.

Get up to walk dogs. Two truck drivers honk at me. Ugh. I pick up one dog's poop then the other poops shortly after. I pick it up. Once home, I get F re-dressed (while I was walking dogs she took off her shorts and shirt). Load F into car, S gets into passenger seat. Drive S to work.

Drive to Costco. Get F out of car and into a shopping cart. We stop first at the aisle with the blenders. F has been asking for a smoothie for days now. Our old (already second-hand) blender finally bit the dust after 4+ years of mediocre service.

We stop at the woman with the applesauce samples. I give F a little paper cup with organic applesauce and a plastic spoon. She flirts with the woman. The woman tells me her son can't eat applesauce or apple juice, that

it gives him diarrhea. I say maybe he's allergic. She asks how old F is. I say 2 and a half. I ask how old her son is. 17 months. We both watch F some more as she giggles and smiles to herself and to the woman. We say bye and keep walking.

I take F out of the cart while the man at the checkout helps put everything on the belt except the blender. I let F enter my pin number on the keypad. F wants to hold my card—I tell her she can as long as she holds it tight. A minute later she throws it on the ground, so I pick it up and put it back in my wallet. F is upset. We walk to the exit.

Once home I take F inside. The dog jumps up on F excitedly. F takes all her clothes off again.

13:37 In bed with F. She's nursing and will fall asleep shortly. I have my computer on my lap and begin writing.

14:07 I look at my phone and I feel a bit nauseated for some reason. I think about what I put in the smoothie and if there's any reason why any of that stuff would make me feel sick? Maybe I need to close my eyes for a minute.

Get up. Print S's agendas for his Toastmasters meeting tonight. F refuses to get dressed, so I load her in the car in just her diaper, bringing her outfit with me. I put the printed agendas on the floor in the back of the car. I drive to Lowe's.

After parking, I get F dressed. I carry her into the store, putting her in another cart. I am in a hurry. I have to go pick S up from work in less than 30 mins. I know what I need in the store—a piece of wood that is 1/4-inch thick so I can finally roll out the clay to make the tiles the correct thickness. I walk past the key-cutting desk, hesitating for a moment. I think, do I have time to get a couple more house keys cut? (Right now we only have 1 between us. S dropped his under the porch. The other one broke in two a while back). I keep walking. I eventually find the aisle I'm looking for. I search the labels for the right size and come to an 8 foot length of pine that is 1/4 inch thick. Perfect.

In line for the checkout and F is standing up in the cart and wants to get down. I tell her she can't because she doesn't have any shoes on. She points at the bags of chips on the shelf next to us and says, "Snacks! Snacks!" I tell her she can't have those snacks, that I'll get her a snack when we get home. Should've packed a snack for her.... She's squirming and hitting me and I gently tell her to please stop hitting me and that we're almost ready to go.

We make it back to the car. We drive to daddy's work.

17:09 S comes out of work and says he's going to take F inside quickly to show her off, as his coworkers have been asking about her. S and F go inside for less than 3 minutes and when they come out he dances with her

around the car and she giggles and squeals. S puts her back in her car seat behind me and then gets in to drive. Home. I cry on the couch for a little while. Feeling confused and insecure and wondering about the future. F is hungry so I make her some lentil soup and cut up some cucumber (skins removed).

F and I go outside in the backyard with the dogs. I bring my glass of wine. I douse her in bug repellent. She finds a snail. It smells dead. She points to the planes overhead (she always sees them before I do). "Lane! Lane!" Her diaper is so full and I know she has pooped but she won't let me touch her diaper to take it off. So I just watch her looking at everything with her big, soggy bottom drooping down.

I eventually convince her to come inside. We head straight to the bathroom. I start the water and she starts taking her diaper off herself. I ask her if I can help and before she can answer I already have it off. I roll the turd into the toilet and put the diaper in the garbage can. I flush. I wipe F's bottom and she attempts to climb in the tub. I tell her to wait so I can make sure it's not too hot. I feel the water. I lift her into the tub.

She plays with her toys, and at one point lines up her little friends and then scoops them all up off the side of the tub at the same time in a giant group hug. I tell her how sweet she is to hug her toys like that. We sit there for a while and I text a sitter about coming to sit tomorrow. I think I left it too late to text though.

F motions for me to come sit with her in the bath. I concede. I haven't washed my hair in about a week anyway. I take my t-shirt off, and upon revealing my breasts, F exclaims, "Ooooooooooh! Boooooiesssss!"

She lets me wash her hair and then I tell her I'm going to wash my hair too. I almost forgot how good it feels to have clean hair. I lift F out of the bath and place her bunny towel on her head. I turn the water back on and rinse my hair. She starts playing with the conditioner bottle and gets a little out and starts rubbing it on her legs. F plays peek-a-boo with herself in the long mirror that hangs on the bathroom door.

We are in the back room and we are both still naked when S comes home. F is so excited to see him. She runs down the hall and I can hear her at the door, "Daddy! Daddy!" I am pulling out an old maternity shirt and some pineapple pajama bottoms from the dresser when I hear a tapping and I remember that S doesn't have a key. I walk quickly down the hall and unlock the front door and he is already squatting down, ready to give her a hug. Instead, she escapes past him and runs onto the front porch in all her naked glory.

S and I talk for a few moments and I share my fears and insecurities. We are sitting on the kitchen floor. F is running up and down the hallway, naked. We watch her together, I cry a little, and we watch her some more. She is exclaiming all kinds of things in her own language, at the top of her voice. It's about 9pm maybe?

F and I are finally in bed. I read her 4 books while she nurses. I forget to bring in her toothbrush, so after the last book I go get it. She comes with me and tries to start playing in the front room again. All the lights are off and I pick her up and bring her back to bed. She lets me brush her teeth without a fuss, so long as she can keep her hand on one of my nipples. After brushing we lay down together and I wait for her to fall asleep. Eventually I sneak away. It's about 22:30 or so. (A late night for F).

23:00 S comes in, kisses me on the forehead, looks me in the eyes and tells me he loves me.

23:10 I get up and unwrap my second vegan chocolate donut of the day from its plastic wrap. I try not to feel too guilty. Writing fuel.

23:42 Still writing. This is too long. I should not have eaten that donut.

23:50 Get up to take a shit. B barks at something and I hear her trot down the hallway. Hoping F doesn't wake up.

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12:00 a.m. Write weekly gratitude entry.

12:11 Read daughter's gratitude entry (written earlier in the day).

12:14 Check dryer. Decide to take it out instead of waiting until the morning because it's dry now. Husband helps reluctantly, initial response was "leave it."

12:18 Distribute folded laundry to respective rooms.

12:22 Bed.

5:40 Alarm goes off, ask husband what time it is. He replies, hitting the snooze button, I record time and go back to bed.

5:48 Alarm sounds again, repeat of the above sequence several times.

6:06 Hear daughter's alarm, get up to wake her, she says, "2 more minutes."

6:10 Go downstairs, unplug cell phones from charging, use bathroom.

6:14 Husband comes downstairs, says, "Good morning," and proceeds to put out the recycling and trash for curbside pick-up.

6:16 Put together small gift for daughter intended for her yesterday. She walks down the stairs and I stop so she doesn't see my last-minute arranging.

6:17 Daughter says, "Morning." I get out almond milk, nasal spray, and multivitamin for daughter. Fill a glass of water for her, and for myself.

6:19 I resume gift assembly, write, "Hygge" 3 times on a bath bomb package, then write, "More Hygge" on movie gift card, place in bag, attach "Celebrate" sticker and hand to daughter. She questions, "Is that for me?" I reply, "Yes." (Side note: Disney Frozen Jr. songs are stuck in a loop in my head from the musical

performance the day before.... “For the first time in forever...”).

6:22 Daughter passes gas, says, “excuse me,” leaves to bathroom promptly.

6:25 I check cell for time and husband asks if I’m walking thank you card out to parent giving daughter a ride to school this morning.

6:26 Check time again. Open garage door for carpool ride to be seen, tell daughter, “You’re running out of time,” through the bathroom door. Husband watches me and stands nearby (he tends to shadow me, in a dazed state when it’s early), daughter exits bathroom. She decides to leave 1/4 of her cereal behind, saying, “I think I’m done” and goes upstairs. Husband takes cereal bowl, empties it, and leaves it in the sink. I retrieve spoon and bowl to put in dishwasher and put away the clean dishes from the night before.

6:31 Carpool arrives. Husband announces, “S, she’s here!” Daughter: “Really!?”

6:32 I text parent: “Uno momento!!!” “Sorry for delay, all tired!” Parent texts reply: “No worries, us too!” “Take your time.”

6:33 “Feeling kinda queasy right now,” daughter says. I help her brush her hair after she says she can brush it in parent’s car. I give her a kiss and a hug, and she walks out to the waiting car.

6:34 Text parent, “Thanks for (car emoji)!!” sleepy face emoji.

6:35 Resume putting away clean dishes, dump out leftover water from daughter’s drinking glass.

6:38 Take picture of a quote with cellphone that catches an indoor rainbow on it.

6:39 Bathroom.

6:42 Let out yawn and wonder if bananas are salvageable in a banana-bread-way or need to be tossed for today’s garbage pick-up. Stop to evaluate. Decide to peel to make an informed decision.

6:45 Ask husband to ready a Ziploc bag, start peeling bananas, save all 4 in a Ziploc. Decide to label it with a date due to multiple bags of bananas in the freezer already. Ask husband to run peels to the garbage can.

6:48 Take picture of Sunday comic involving a toilet to send to a friend who had a leaky toilet this past week. Mentioned the funny coincident when I saw her the day before and she said she wanted to see it.

6:49 Husband asks if I’m going back to bed and I inquire what he plans to do. “I’m going back to bed if you are,” he says. Husband goes up to bed.

6:51 Send comic to friend, put the comics in the recycling. Line small garbage can after tossing a paper towel and seeing husband didn’t line it after taking bananas to the trash can.

6:57 Drink a glass of water and head to bed with cell phone and revived-from-the-dead vacuum (saved from the garbage) after husband re-tested it this a.m..

7:01 Texts binging in, turn down volume on cell phone, respond to texts.

7:08 Make notes/reminders to write down moments from yesterday in daughter's annual year-in-review birthday letter outline. Text parent to let me know if issues with gift card activation. Husband's arm draped over my stomach.

7:11 Look at cell phone and save/e-mail pictures from yesterday's events.

7:16 Text friend well wishes for trip she leaves on today.

7:29 Put cell phone down, close eyes.

7:58 Check phone. Go back to resting.

8:00 Alarm/Snooze.

8:02 Text alert from friend.

8:09 Alarm/Snooze.

8:15 Alarm/Snooze.

8:18 Alarm/Snooze.

8:27 Alarm/Snooze.

8:35 Alarm, husband rolls over and says, "I know something else you can write in that book..." We have sex.

8:50 Husband gets up to shower. I go to the bathroom, read my daily passage, and make the bed.

8:56 Take picture of daily passage that references the birthing experience to share with someone later.

9:02 Straighten daughter's bed.

9:04 Call about mammogram, on hold, start making smoothie for breakfast.

9:12 Take the "call back when a representative is available," option.

9:17 Receive call back.

9:30 Hang up with tentative appointment after much discussion.

9:31 Talk shop with husband about errands, pick-ups, grocery list, etc. Husband leaves.

9:36 Text friend if she can "talk medical for a few minutes." She replies she's at work, "Sorry :/."

9:40 Log on computer to Google search concerns.

9:45 Check e-mail and respond to amateur photo contest request asking me to narrow my submissions to one photo for judging. Select one photo after consideration.

10:02 Friend texts me asking if I contacted doctor's office.

10:05 Log into medical portal to contact nurse with latest mammogram scheduling update.

10:20 E-mail OBGYN's office about assessing urgency of a breast exam due to slight swelling I've been experiencing on one breast.

10:46 Respond to friend letting her know I e-mailed the doctor.

10:48 Head to shower.

10:52 Decide to brush teeth, then shower. Husband texts, "Almost done," from work errand. I reply shower head emoji.

10:54 Look at breasts in mirror while brushing teeth.

10:55 Shower.

11:10 Call husband while I pluck my facial hairs to talk grocery list updates.

11:20 Look up Frozen Jr. song "Dangerous to Dream" to listen to while continue to pluck facial hair, as Frozen

Jr. songs continue to sound in my head from weekend performances. Get dressed.

11:50 Leave for carpool duty pick-up.

12:00 p.m. Arrive to pick-up daughter and friend to drive home from school. Generally ignored while they play a game on friend's cell phone but make several attempts at some conversation. Get turned around driving back to friend's house.

12:27 Drop off daughter's friend.

12:30 Call husband back for an errand update.

12:35 Drive home, talk to daughter about how it went seeing a boy on school day break, who told her he liked her yesterday. She shares about his enthusiasm for seeing her and how it makes her heart hurt. Is unsure of this new feeling/experience. First mutual crush.

12:45 Daughter brings in recycling can at my request. We look at texts from her uncle about yesterday's performance.

12:50 Fill up water can, ask daughter to go out to water plants after she finishes writing about her new crush.

12:52 Listen to voicemail from my father, needs to talk to me about an upcoming appointment.

12:57 Text another grocery request to husband, then write down notes about daughter's crush story for her annual birthday letter.

1:08 Husband calls asking for lunch requests.

1:15 Daughter and I text lunch pick-up requests.

1:16 Talk shop with daughter—homework, boy feelings, etc.

1:18 Text pictures to niece.

1:22 Send winky kiss face emoji to husband.

1:24 Talk with daughter about the mixed emotions that come with someone liking you and showing/expressing it.

1:26 Daughter starts looking a cell phone, playing "Words with Friends."

1:28 Daughter looking at phone still, telling me about her school day and entering word into "Words with Friends."

1:29 Ask daughter to put her phone down so we can continue conversation.

1:35 Text daughter's friend's mom about possible pool party she mentioned to let her know we didn't hear anything yet from person. Daughter returns to "Words with Friends" game.

1:43 Daughter asks if she can get a game on her smartphone.

I tell her we'll talk as a family when her dad gets home.

1:48 Send text to provider confirming upcoming appointment.

1:49 Write various notes and reminders on calendar.

1:50 Check on-line school calendar.

1:52 Lunch arrives via husband's delivery.

2:14 Clean up lunch, revisit game request for smartphone, put away groceries, put fruit in colanders to wash. Look up information on an application.

2:20 Tell/remind husband to keep boundaries when talking to family members about certain topics. He says, "Okay. Okay. Okay!"

2:21 Daughter starts playing newly approved game on her smartphone.

2:26 Call my father back, after taking deep breaths to brace myself... challenging phone call.

2:56 Friend calls my cell, while I'm on landline with my father. I end call with my father and return her call a minute later.

2:57–3:30 Talk with friend. Debrief her on mammogram situation.

3:35 Talk errands; library, post office—husband anxious and ready to complete errands. I eat watermelon as I pace around kitchen and retrieve papers.

3:38 Tell daughter no more game, phone away, time for homework. A friend texts her asking about going to the gym to exercise. We agree on a time later this evening. Friend needs a ride to the gym.

3:42 Computer, check e-mail. Daughter begins to read on own.

3:52 Husband returns from more errands; announces he's going to feed the birds.

3:54 Husband back from the bird feeder, asks if I saw my brother's new car yesterday and I reply yes as he comments on the car's extra row of seating (we're due to replace a car that is nearly 23 years old).

3:57 Google search daughter's new crush to see if he has a digital footprint—nothing.

4:00 Look up daughter for same reason—nothing.

4:01 Begin editing photos and choosing for blog posts.

4:15 Friend calls about pool invitation. Venting. "I don't like drama," she says repeatedly.

4:27 Pass on information to daughter and husband about possible pool party plans falling through for Wednesday.

4:35 Text same friend who vented on phone to enjoy her break and thank her for the call.

4:35 Back to editing and labeling photos.

4:45 Found pictures I forgot to e-mail another parent, forward them along.

5:00 Daughter gets up to check her phone and I show her some pictures on the laptop.

5:01 Husband gets up for a snack from the fridge.

5:05 Relinquish laptop to daughter so she can study through Quizlet.

5:07-5:50 Talk to my brother about family issues, feel more frustrated by his many excuses.

5:55 Sit on couch. Watch "Downton Abbey" with daughter and husband.

6:21 Daughter asks if she can have some Junior Mints candy. Husband replies yes.

6:44 Stop "Downton Abbey" before finishing, get ready for the gym.

7:00 Husband, daughter and I get in the car and head to pick-up daughter's friend. Her friend's mom comes out to chat, then we leave for the gym.

7:15-8:15 Workout.

8:17 Leave gym, return daughter's friend home, chat during the ride. Friend retrieves and offers 3 macaroons

to daughter in a Ziploc bag. Daughter's friend tells us about all the baking she has been doing: Egg casserole, donuts, cheesecake brownies. Thanks us for the ride.

8:30 Return home, daughter showers.

8:35 Pour glass of water and have supplements/vitamins.

8:36 Husband gets out cold pizza from the night before, we talk about personal matters.

8:38 Hear daughter singing "Hard Day's Night" in shower.

8:43 Arrange a snack-like dinner of lentil chips, carrots, hummus with garlic, lemon and olive oil.

8:53 Daughter comes downstairs, begins getting out supplies for smoothie.

9:08 Eat too many lentil chips, ask husband to take the bag away. Look up Sour Milk skit I recall from "Saturday Night Live." Watch together.

9:23 Finish "Downton Abbey" episode.

9:25 Get a text about pool party business.

9:42 "Downton Abbey" ends, tell daughter it's time for bed.

9:45 Start brushing my teeth, daughter joins me in bathroom to do same. Daughter says she has some "tea" (slang for gossip) and shares it.

9:50 I find another hair on chin and tweeze it. Put some towels aside for laundry to do tomorrow.

9:56 Text back response to mom friend about end of school plans.

She shares many pictures from the weekend that my daughter is in.

9:58 Tell my daughter she needs to see the pictures, as I'm laughing at them. She opens bathroom door to see them, but I tell her first she must put the laundry away that's been sitting on her desk. She balks and then puts the laundry away.

10:00 Show pictures to daughter and we talk about some alternative ideas for celebrating the last day of school. Give her kisses and say good night.

10:08 Tell husband that daughter is going to bed. Show him pictures on the phone that we were looking at.

10:15 Take a bath and text back friend who sent pictures while in tub, then shower.

10:43 Brush tongue because garlic I ate was strong and lingering.

10:48 Send some last few texts and get pj's on. Turn off cell phone. Write in response to a journal prompt for the day.

Around 11:00 Lay down and yell down to husband, "I'm going to bed."

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3am Wake up briefly to adjust my sleep apnea mask, luckily fall back to sleep pretty quickly.

7am Wake up an hour before O, but after B. She usually wakes us up anytime between 630-730am, so I actually had time to make coffee and check email and look at friends' pictures on Instagram before I hear her get up

and sleepily come to our room. It's wake-up time, she often calls.

8am We all go downstairs and get breakfast. I make iced coffees. I also pack her lunch and snacks for a day at camp. There is not really any time for her usual morning play since she slept in.

858am Load up my car with tree branch sections I trimmed myself last week to take to the dump.

905am Arrive only 5 minutes late to a half-day camp at her nursery school. This will be her very last week there before going to Kindergarten this fall.

940am Go to health center and pick up my prescription for high blood pressure, something I'd rather not have to take. Am 10 minutes late to physical therapy for plantar fasciitis.

11am After picking up a bottled smoothie and several Rice Krispie treats at the health center's café for B, I drive just a couple miles to our old house, which I have been renting out for about 5 years now. The tenants just moved out, and I am greeted by a messy mountain of garbage on the curb, and inside by dog hair, detritus and grime everywhere, filthy appliances, damaged floors and walls. I'm glad O is in camp so I have time to deal with this.

1215pm After assessing the situation and taking photos of the damage and dirt, I rush 8 miles back to the school to pick O up. She argues a bit when I say we don't have

any time to play on the playground, so I have to explain that the dump closes at 1:15, and that I have to get her to her afternoon American Girl craft camp one town over before that.

1250pm Drop O off at the local art center, which is abuzz with all sorts of kids' courses, from metal-smithing to photography to O's camp, the only one that sparked her interest from the list I presented her with months ago. She takes to it immediately.

105pm Just make it to the dump. I unload the logs and some of the debris from the rental, and load up two blue recycling containers of the nice, free mulch they supply, which I will put at the base of the big old copper beech tree at home.

130pm Arrive home, but before I can go inside to do some work, I need to water all the plants in the front and side. I go in and tell B all about the condition of our old house and take a quick shower. I was lucky enough to be able to buy it with earnings from selling my work in my first few years showing at a Chelsea gallery. The sales have tapered off a lot since then, and so has the property value, which is why I feel like I need to make some rental income on it before reselling. I quickly eat a yogurt rather than spend time on lunch.

145pm I sit down upstairs at my desk, and there are not too many emails, especially those from students and colleagues, now that school is not in session. I

get distracted a little bit—pay the real estate tax on the rental, try to list a book I am finished with about DNA influence and nature vs. nurture on Amazon. I get down to business and work a little bit on several long acquisition questionnaires I need to fill out for a museum that have received my work through donations. I put the paperwork aside and get on with what I have been chipping away at every day these past few days—going through the folders of photos taken digitally that have been sitting on my desktop, waiting to be looked at. Some are two years old; many are one year old. Every day now, I am using Bridge to go through and rate and file the best pictures in one or two entire folders, so I can get them looked at, thought-about, moved and backed-up.

305pm I start to keep my eye on the clock more, because O's camp ends at 4pm, and it is about 15 mins away, but with summer traffic on 95, anything is possible. I am excited by the pictures I am finding, and add a few new ones to a Powerpoint I am making for a lecture at an MFA program I teach at for one week next month. I quickly redo a photo using a tripod that I took last week of a stained cover O uses. I had the ISO too high, so there was a lack of detail that was bugging me.

330pm I really quickly vacuum O's room, which I had to pick up yesterday in order to get everywhere. B had to agree to take pictures of her "set-ups" before she would let me clean up.

350pm Arrive a little early, because sometimes she gets upset and wonders where I am, so I don't want to be late on the first day in a new place. She is playing outside and looks so happy. She shows me the pile of crafts (candy canes, snowmen, necklaces and crowns) she made using mostly colored pipe cleaners.

420pm Arrive home and deny her a late snack, opting for an early dinner instead. I heat up grocery-store pre-made meals, everyone getting something different. It's just easier. I realize that since the garage didn't call yet, it is likely that my car is not ready to be picked up today with its \$1,800 in repairs.

5pm We are done eating early, before we even usually begin. She plays doctor with her doll and rides her tricycle around the house while I clean up. B is exhausted from mowing the lawn in the heat, but we comply when she directs us to draw her foxes. She luckily likes mine, and adds a few stickers.

530pm She teaches us how to play duck duck goose (her way), and we look at her art projects.

545pm We let her watch a video or two on my iPad, some new version of "My Little Ponies" that I am not crazy about while I sneak a Rice Krispie Treat. I thought about unloading the dishwasher, but relaxed instead. That turns into being on my phone, and I make a list of what needs to be done at the rental, a list of possible tenant deductions from their deposit, then look at

Roombas on Amazon. She announces that she wants to play “Fairypoly,” which is better than the video, so we all play for several times around the board until she’s done with it.

645pm We head upstairs, and give her 15 mins to play in her room before bed while we both sit down for a minute.

7pm Start bedtime routine: the usual pj’s, potty, teeth, books, struggle.

745pm It’s B’s turn to sit with her and tell her a story before letting her drift off on her own, so I say goodnight and head upstairs back to my desk. I do emails, pick up where I left off editing old pictures.

9pm B coaxes me downstairs to watch the HBO show, “Baskets.” After that, I am on my iPad and fall into the Amazon Prime Day hole and order O a kids’ bento box for the Fall, and buy a Roomba I can’t afford. (It was \$100 off.)

1030pm Jot down what O did today in a daily journal I have been keeping for her since birth, then read a few essays in a new collection, “What my Mother and I Don’t Talk About.”

1115pm Put on my sleep apnea mask and turn off the light.

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3:56 – Stir and make room for S to get into bed between J and me.

6:00 – Turn off alarm, wake up and shower.

6:13 – Tell R to go back to sleep.

6:15 – Make coffee.

6:25 – Open curtains, grab blanket, start timer and read book.

6:55 – Stop reading. J gets up and goes for walk to get coffee. Talk to R and discuss the quality of morning light. Take photos of my hand in morning light.

7:02 – Check email.

7:03 – Negotiate TV time with R & S.

7:06 – Check email.

7:15 – J returns from walk and starts work.

7:20 – Eat handful of almonds.

7:22 – Pack my backpack for swimming & tell J I’m going to the gym.

7:28 – Return forgotten shoes and toy to neighbors.

7:30 – Walk to the gym for 8:00 am aqua-fit class.

8:57 – Leave gym, buy groceries, and return home.

9:34 – Arrive home and warn R & S they only have 15 min of TV left. Unpack groceries and make breakfast. Check social media.

9:47 – J goes to 10:00 dentist appointment. I feel bad for getting groceries without checking with J about his schedule.

9:54 – Tell R & S to turn off TV. Sit down with R & S to plan our day.

10:01 – S shows me a diorama she made. I wonder what a psychologist would say about the art being produced. I wonder if I should be more careful about what TV she is watching.

10:02 – Tell kids to get dressed, brush hair and teeth.

10:03 – Annoyed by S stomping up the stairs to show her displeasure.

10:06 – Listen to news while doing breakfast dishes. Make breakfast for S. Drink S's leftover smoothie.

10:29 – Teach S to tie her shoes.

10:41 – Make coffee. Check email. Ignore R & S.

10:51 – Stop emailing and talk to children.

10:52 – Return to email.

10:53 – Stop fighting between R & S.

10:53 – Return to email.

10:56 – Raise voice at children.

10:58 – Watch S proudly show J how she can tie her shoe laces.

11:15 – Do online shopping for summer camp supplies with R.

11:27 – Clear dining room table and prep area for melting wax craft. R & S go outside to gather leaves for craft.

11:35–12:34 – Manage play with leaves and hot wax with R & S.

12:15 – J makes lunch for everyone, except S.

12:34 – Stop craft and eat lunch.

12:43 – Continue to work/play with leaves and wax with R & S.

12:47 – Tell R & S that they are not watching TV.

1:08 – Make lunch for S.

1:10 – Tell S she can't watch TV.

1:15 – Do laundry. Put away shopping. Refill basement bathroom toilet paper roll.

1:24 – Clean wax off table and photograph wax and leaf creations.

1:57 – Unload dishwasher. Load dishwasher. Wonder if anyone else thinks about dishes as much as I do.

2:09 – Make snack for S.

2:13 – R & S draw while I prep dinner for tomorrow, take out garbage and put away dishes that have arrived in kitchen.

2:29 – Check email.

2:30 – Tell S that she can't watch TV.

2:31 – Check email.

2:32 – Answer R's questions about the zoo.

2:34 – Check email.

2:35 – Answer S's questions about going for a bike ride, arranging a play date, and going outside. Get a hat for S and send her outside to play.

2:39 – Text neighbors about an evening play date for R & S.

2:45 – Receive 28 kisses from S.

2:46 – Answer texts from neighbors.

2:47 – Request kids not talk to me for 5 min. Answer texts, check email, investigate after school activity options for the Fall.

3:02 – Watch S sing a French song. Take photos of S wrapped in curtain while performing. Marvel at the fact that S speaks a language that I don't.

3:08 – Put a Band-Aid on R's foot.

3:11 – Look at options for after school Fall activities.

3:13 – Tell S she can't watch TV.

3:23 – Review weather predictions for the week. Look in kitchen for snack for me. Pack bag for R's aerial silk class. Make snack for R.

3:33 – Review call for submission.

3:35 – Tell R she can't watch TV.

3:37 – Give up on reading.

3:41 – Brush my hair and put make-up on. Refill toilet paper roll in upstairs bathroom. Gather bath mat, shower curtain & swimsuits left in the bathroom and take items to laundry room. Ask R & S who keeps forgetting to refill the toilet paper rolls. Transfer laundry loads from dryer to couch and from washer to dryer. Put shower curtain & bath mat in washing machine.

3:54 – Tell kids to stop fighting. Gather dirty dishes and put in dishwasher.

3:56 – Tell S to stop asking the same question over and over again and to give me some space. Tell R to get ready to leave.

4:00 – Tell J that I'm leaving S with him. Fight with S over water bottle. Drive R to silks class.

4:21 – Leave R at class. Go buy fruit and supplies for next week's summer camp.

5:00–6:00 – J takes S on a bike ride.

5:14 – Drive back to R's class and watch the last 10 min.

5:35 – Drive R home. R leads conversation on topics of YouTube, discarded condoms, tourniquets, and diseases.

5:50 – Unload groceries. Tell R to practice her guitar. Check texts. Help R with guitar.

6:03 – Make dinner.

6:10 – Negotiate with R about TV.

6:14 – Tell S she can't watch TV.

6:20–6:30 – J and I fight with R about TV.

6:25 – Feed S dinner.

6:35 – Tell J dinner is ready.

6:36 – Start eating dinner with S.

6:37 – Eat dinner alone.

6:47 – Sit with R & J as they eat dinner.

7:00 – Clean up dinner dishes and eat leftover bites from S's plate.

7:09 – Check email. S & J go outside to clean the deck.

7:18 – Continue TV battles with R. J tries to help R find a French TV show.

7:25 – J gets frustrated and walks away from R who is crying. J threatens to disconnect TV. J sits outside with S. R asks me to help find a TV show for her.

7:25–7:55 – Watch TV with R, while eating the rest of my dinner.

7:57 – Send S for a quick bath. Hug and talk to J.

8:05 – Send R & S to get ready for bed. Set alarm reminders for tomorrow’s plans.
 8:10–8:19 – Snuggle R in bed. J snuggles S.
 8:19 – Surf on phone. Talk to J. J leaves for the gym.
 8:23–8:42 – Snuggle S in bed.
 8:45 – Review my “to do” list. Set timer for 30 min.
 Work in my artist sketchbook.
 9:17 – Put away sketchbook & answer texts.
 9:25 – Clean kitchen.
 9:40 – Work on image sequence for upcoming social media posts.
 10:00 – Watch TV while folding laundry.
 10:30–10:35 – J returns from gym. Talk to J.
 10:35–11:04 – Watch TV. J returns to work.
 11:04 – Pull shower curtain from dryer and re-hang it.
 Put away laundry.
 11:15 – Shower.
 11:20 – Go to bed. J continues to work.

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4:00 2.5 year old son can be heard crying in his room, my husband, X, goes to him. Finds he has peed his bed, changes diaper and takes off pajamas. We go back to sleep.
 6:30 Son can be heard crying. X goes checks on him and he has peed again. Tries to get him to back to sleep.
 6:45 After moaning for 15 minutes he enters our room to cuddle with us in bed. Both of us pretend to be

asleep. I am 5 months pregnant. I get up to go to the bathroom and complain about my back. X turns on TV for son. Son is very loud chatting about the bus he sees on TV so we stop trying to sleep and sit up with him and watch busses in London on TV. We try to find a bus line or place we recognize but it is very boring. I volunteer to take him downstairs to let X sleep in.
 7:00 I take the sheets off my son’s bed. I pick out clothing for the day from his closet. I get myself dressed.
 I ask my son to go downstairs—he puts up a fight about going into the living room and doesn’t like that the dog is there jumping.
 7:30 Breakfast is served. I put an ice pack on my back which is hurting. I feed the dog which makes my son cry. I let the dog out. I eat some mango which makes my son cry. I microwave coffee left over from yesterday. I move away from the microwave because I heard it’s not good to be around it when pregnant. My son is closer to the microwave than I am and I feel bad about that.
 7:45 I Skype call grandma in NYC and great grand-parents in Poland. I let the dog in. I serve son Cheerios so he will sit still and talk to family on Skype. He doesn’t want to. I try to get him to sing songs for them. He does but is shy and very quiet and they can’t hear him. It’s “My Little Sunshine” but he is facing away from the iPad as he sings it.
 8:15 I change his diaper and get him dressed. He does not want to go to daycare today because the new baby is there and the new baby cries.

8:30 Finish Skype call and put on my son's shoes to go outside. He is more cooperative than usual. He is scared of going to daycare today so he wants to take a bus ticket with him. He is on the verge of tears but excited to see if there are any buses outside.

8:45 Drop off at daycare, chat with caregiver about weekend. Explain why he has a bus ticket.

9:00 Return home and plan day with X who is now awake. I want to go back to sleep but offer X a ride to work instead because in my peripartum depression group we discussed that sleeping too much is a depression trigger for me. I go downstairs while he has a work phone call in our room and takes a shower. I check my email and finish coffee. I send text message invites to my birthday party this weekend. I email a massage therapist to set up an appointment. I let the dog outside. I take my antidepressants and prenatal vitamin.

9:45 I let the dog in. X comes downstairs and I ask him to take the laundry down off the line and hang up a new load from last night. I drive him 10 minutes to work. We avoid news on the radio and find a hip hop station.

10:00 I drive 5 more minutes and park the car and arrive at the YMCA. I do 20 laps in the pool, shower slowly and then go to a 11:00 Yoga Fusion class. It is a beginner class and the teacher says it will be easy. I forget my hair scrunchie so my hair is falling on my face. I forget yoga clothing so I take off my billowy blouse and do the class in my bra and maternity tights. The

teacher plays a muzak version of Phil Collins' "In the Air Tonight." The drum solo part comes on as we are windmilling our way up to do Warrior 2. I laugh out loud at this timing and get dirty looks. The class was hard for me.

12:00 Back feels better but now I am very tired. I go to the café across from the Y and invite a friend to join me there. She is busy. I order a kale salad, coffee and pastry with rhubarb in it. This all cost \$23 which I feel bad about because we paid the mortgage today and put down the deposit for our house painters. I realize I should only have one cup of coffee a day when I'm pregnant but drink the cappuccino anyway. I search online for dog sitter for when we go on vacation in August. Search website to request medical records from last birth as my doula recommended. Try to edit next newsletter but internet is slow at café. Start doing this instead.

2:30 Return home, let dog out. Put on a load of laundry.

3:00 X calls and asks for a ride home—he has a migraine. I pick him up from work and am worried he may have had a concussion after a bike crash last week. We call and make an appointment with a doctor and speak to a nurse on the phone. She says he has to rest—no screens or daylight. I give him water and pain medication. I realize I will not get to sending my newsletter, walking the dog, folding the laundry or preparing meals for the week today. I let the dog in.

5:00 I quickly clean out refrigerator, there has been something rotting in there that we've been avoiding.

I dump almost everything out. Looking at what is left I feel stumped about what to make for dinner.

5:20 I drive to go pick up son from daycare and chat with caregiver again.

5:45 Return home and let dog out. Let son and dog play outside while I do some weeding. Water the plants outside together. We all get wet but it's a beautiful day and my son is laughing. I water the roses and he starts to cry.

6:15 We go inside. We play. Son is hitting me, X comes downstairs to help mediate because he hears me getting frustrated. We all fold some laundry, son shows his baby dolls how and then starts to throw the clothes around.

X goes upstairs to rest. I finish folding the laundry.

7:00 I prepare dinner. Noodles with leftover soup. I feed the dog. I let the dog outside.

7:00 I serve dinner. Son throws half of it on floor and the dog eats it. I serve him more. He eats enough.

7:30 X comes downstairs and sits with us.

7:45 I go upstairs and bring the folded laundry with me even though it hurts my back. I give my son a bath while X cleans up after dinner and cooks for us even though he has a migraine and should be resting.

8:15 I read bedtime stories.

8:30 I sing lullabies.

8:45 Lights out, I say goodnight to son. I go downstairs, chat with X. He is now tired, probably over-extended.

He encourages me to try the heirloom tomatoes which he sliced and are waiting for me in the kitchen with some bread and olive oil. I see them in the kitchen light and it makes my heart ache with love.

9:00 He goes upstairs when son starts pounding on door, dog is barking. He says he'll deal with kid if I get the dog. Deal. But I'm typing this instead. The dog is scratching at the door. I'm ignoring her. X is singing to son and I hear the door close upstairs. #icebae is trending on twitter and I am very depressed about the concentration camps. I donate \$50 to RAICES and start a fundraiser for my birthday and turn off the Internet.

9:30 I make myself the tomatoes and olive oil bread. It is good but I know I will pay in heartburn. Dog starts to bark very loudly and doesn't come when called. I go out and bring her inside accidentally slamming a door. I hope I didn't wake anybody. I'm usually asleep by now but enjoying the quiet moment in the kitchen alone.

10:00 I go upstairs. I am very tired. My back hurts and I toss around a bunch trying to get comfortable. I shouldn't have had that cappuccino. I worry about my husband's concussion. I fall asleep.

11:30 I get up and go to the bathroom and take a Tums for heartburn. X tells me to sit up and offers his pillow but I don't want it because it hurts my back. We have a conversation I won't remember. I go back to sleep.

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00.30

Turn the lights out.

I fall asleep to the audio of “Infinite Jest.”

Wake up. G is moaning at irregular intervals. I bleed out not one—but two—tampons.

I go to his room. He throws his whole body in the direction of travel, toward the living room.

7.55

I look at the oven clock.

Sit down and stare into space. I need to plan my fitness regime for the next two weeks.

Take out a box of strawberries from the fridge and pick out each stem to G’s liking. Refill his milk and, after he lurches toward some brightly colored bottles, pick out an orange to complement his purple flavored water. G takes a big gulp of milk and sneezes it all over the glass table. I wipe with a dry paper towel.

G picks apart misshapen balls of clay, places them in the palm of my hand to round out. He plops down on my lap, waving at me a static toy train, Thomas (or is it Percy?). Pries it apart from its freight car and chucks behind our armchair. Pushes my face to one side. I pick up the train parts, unscrew, replace batteries. This I do every day, and the train will run without pause, until its batteries fail once again.

8.30

There are toys all over. G is wrestling with a big soft lamb on the floor. He waves a black rubber duck in my face. Thomas or Percy sputters around a small circular track, over and over. G runs to the fridge and wipes all of the magnets off in one swoop. I pour M’s mug, which says: “Humble with a hint of Kanye,” half full of oat milk. Plunk a detox tea bag into it and fill the rest with boiling water. I rub a small puddle of orange water into the linoleum floor with my bare foot.

G and I take our vitamins. I unwrap a protein bar for G, and he smashes it repeatedly into his face, mouth covered in melted chocolate. Walks across the room to hand me the empty wrapper. Wipes some chocolate on my computer keyboard. I wipe his face.

8.51

I am desperate for coffee, but we don’t have any.

G “sings” “Twinkle Little Star” at the top of his lungs, as he acts out a drama with Lego cars and ducks, one riding atop a giant Thomas.

I check email dutifully. There is nothing in either inbox. I refresh. Still nothing. I look at a job posting for “Cultural Programmer.”

G alternately chugs orange, purple and white beverages, before shoving his mouth full of strawberries.

9.12

Email comes in from an artist called K with specs for prints and, “Lots of questions for a Monday morning.” I read a lunascope explaining why I have felt so negative lately—Capricorn full moon lunar eclipse. “If you feel yourself falling into a black hole of negativity sit down and write out all the things you are grateful for.” G stomps on my swollen toe that must have been broken and never healed.

Laundry, folding. Dress myself. Boil water. Prepare second tea. Wipe down coffee table for second time. Move toys around until the room looks slightly cleaner.

G jumps on the bed that I made and throws the pillows everywhere. He hurls his water bottle, and I lean down to pick it up from under the bed, find a second empty one there. In frustration, he drips purple water on the bed covers. I take the bottles away, and he screams in protest.

10.16

Measure the print sizes and plan wall display.

11.30

M arrives late, due to central London Extinction Rebellion protests, for brunch to say goodbye for a week. We leave but not before a mound of poop in G’s pull-ups is discovered. I change the diaper.

12.16

G squirms on my lap as we eat brown-sugar-crust-ed grapefruit and full-fat Greek yogurt, in a fusion-y café

full of kitsch where Leonard Cohen plays on vinyl. G motions at a stuffed parakeet on the wall. M and I talk about K’s prints, one showing naked John wrapped around Yoko.

I kiss M goodbye and push G in the stroller to nursery. I am reminded our fees are overdue.

Head to the bus stop and wait 15 mins for the bus to arrive. Check email where I am informed that my studio mate is leaving. Offer that studio to my cousin. A man at the stop is smelly. Another man at the stop asks me if I am getting on his bus. “No.” I hop on the 30. Cut through Hackney Central choked with traffic. Bus driver ignores my request to get off. Get off finally. Backtrack and cut through housing projects to get to the gym. On the way, notice a church track from childhood is playing in my head. Decide “Purify my Heart” will be the title of my yet-unnamed, in-progress painting series.

13.25

Barre class—cheerful instructor gives commands over sultry rap music.

14.35

Kid with a marijuana plant ball cap’s elbow plows into my shoulder. I turn around and shoot him a snarl I’m sure he sees. Health-food shop run.

Rude doorman doesn’t want to look for packages. I ask him why he’s acting annoyed, and he says: “Because there’s a queue,” motioning to a lady who’s

waiting outside with her baby in a pram. I snatch the Nespresso box.

Stop by the vape shop en route to nursery pickup.

15.45

Arrive at nursery 15 minutes late. The sun has come out. G and I take the long way home. Grocery run. Stop on the sidewalk to unwrap cheese. G eats 4 sticks.

G and I roll around on the bed. He gets a kick out of sticking his toys between his legs. David Remnick through the speakers in the next room, talking about imminent Iran catastrophe. Then Willie Nelson talking about Tootsie's in Nashville.

Run around the house putting things away and picking things up.

Make a coffee. Feed G another Greek yogurt with honey.

17.09

Browse art and work on wall displays, as G tears up the room. I am late getting ready, as usual, but the open windows on the screen are tugging.

19.00

A arrives, and I apologize for what she is about to see. Couch is deconstructed and toys are everywhere. Breaded chicken fingers and breaded cauliflower are sitting on the counter, not having yet made their way into the oven.

I don't take a shower.

19.20

Uber pick up. Very sexy rap music playing. I put an earbud in, listen to D's book on the way to D's 40th birthday party.

19.55

Walk up and down a tributary of Leicester Square wondering if I am in the wrong place. Google shows no evidence of the party venue. Servers at Italian restaurant try to get business as I walk back and forth in front of their storefront. Finally, I notice a door marked 9. Ring the bell. Am told to push the door harder. It looks as if it will break. I go through another door and make my way up a winding staircase to find a glamorous room and table set for D's party. I am offered—and gladly take—Champagne.

Find D who greets me warmly and, ever the charming host, ushers me to the nearest people he knows I know, H and E. It has been a while, so E's name escapes me. I am grateful to H when he introduces her to another E I know better. N and A arrive, and the energy in the room is redirected.

I am one seat shy of the head of the table... next to N! I am a great admirer of N and, if not for the Champagne, would be intimidated. N and I speak for what must be two hours. America, UK, what is happening in the world. Where we both come from. Punk and reggae music. Photos of G, then photos of N's children. Romantic histories. A lavish 3 courses including Cornish crab. White wine.

22.30

Speeches delivered by D, A and another man. D's heartfelt acknowledgement of the room. "It's all been reallyyy interesting."

More wine. A jolly gentleman facing me at the table, and conversation about the American South. The lady next to him scowls at a memory of Scarlett O'Hara.

E and H come over. Irreverent and riotously funny conversation ensues. They try to convince me to stay, but I tell them M and I will come to Amsterdam instead.

23.20

Uber finds me. He's in a Merc with limo strip lighting. I am so happy and even on time.

23.56

Try not to look too drunk in front of A. She rushes out politely.

00.00

Open the refrigerator.

+

5:45 AM: Son starts making his wake-up noises—it's the same time every morning, like clockwork. Husband gets up to get dressed and go get him up (it's his day to do the morning).

6:30 AM: Wake up again due to bad shoulder pain from hoisting my big baby, now big toddler. Vow to call the acupuncturist today. Do some stretches in bed.

7:00 AM: Call downstairs to request coffee from husband. Sort laundry, unpack my bag from last week's vacation, remove dirty cloth diaper liner (bulging, smells strongly of ammonia), put away clothes.

7:25 AM: Go downstairs, kiss husband and son. Discuss plans for the day, pour coffee.

7:35 AM: Work at computer: emails, client work, calendar.

9:00 AM: Husband goes to check in with employees; I hang out with son and see him off for the day (he gets picked up once a week to spend the day at his grandparents' house).

9:15 AM: Organize porch and yard with husband: move outdoor furniture, place rocks around the compost bin, clean up after yesterday's event.

9:40 AM: Eat last night's focaccia while standing up watching the cows munch out the kitchen window.

9:45 AM: Back to the computer. Make chiropractor and acupuncture appointments for myself; more client work.

10:25 AM: Pause because shoulders hurt. Stretch out on a yoga ball. Eat a bowl of granola.

10:40 AM: Chat with first resident at our self-directed, off-grid writer's residency. Set her up with an outdoor desk with a power source for her computer. Chat with employees in the garage.

11:05 AM: Go farm: stirrup hoe the weeds in the bottom field veggie patch.

12:05 PM: Interview a prospective fill-in field assistant.

12:45 PM: Farmhouse chats and check-in with husband.

12:55 PM: Quick lunch (lentils in a bowl) while standing.

1:05 PM: Oregano harvest with husband; wood betony harvest.

4:00 PM: Come back inside, husband is on the phone with his mom.

4:30 PM: Leave the house to go meet father-in-law to pick up son. Car key won't work; try repeatedly to get it to work, run inside frustrated to ask husband for help; husband tries, reads manual, figures it out. Off I go.

4:35 PM: Stop to get a soft serve ice cream at the general store in town because it's summer.

4:50 PM: Meet up at the parking lot to pick up son, head back home.

5:10 PM: Stop at library to pick up requested books; amble around town with son, checking out vehicles, a fire hydrant, running on grass, etc.

5:40 PM: Home, feed son lentils, leftover focaccia, and raisins while doing some dishes, phoning a friend, greeting husband when he returns from the field to check in regarding the camper that is arriving soon.

6:20 PM: Pour myself a tumbler of beer and go outside to sit on the front stoop with son.

6:30 PM: Camper arrives, chat for a long time since we used to go to college together (though I don't remember him).

7:15 PM: Help son brush his teeth, bring him outside to give husband a goodnight kiss (since he's now chatting with the camper), upstairs for pajamas, books, bedtime.

7:30 PM: Son is down for the night.

7:35 PM: Eat lentils over greens while watching TV.

7:50 PM: Chat with husband who just came inside. Take a shower.

8:05 PM: Organize things around the kitchen, boil water for tea (fresh chamomile) and a hot water bottle for my shoulder/back.

8:40 PM: In bed with three new library books (yum!), tea, and hot water bottle.

9:40 PM: Husband comes up to bed; chat with him for a while; have sex.

10:15 PM: Goodnight.

+

5.30am My son climbs into bed with my husband and I, he is holding a tiny plastic dragon in each hand. We send him to do his morning task—use the potty, turn on the light and the heat pump in the lounge. When he's done he gets back into bed with us. My husband gets up and makes a coffee for me and a warm milk for our son. We read some stories and I talk to my son about his dentist appointment later today.

7.30am My husband leaves for work. My son can't decide what he would like for breakfast. I leave him to think it over and put a load of washing on and pull some mince out of the freezer for tonight's dinner. Finally, he decides on pineapple pieces and peanut butter on toast. We are listening to the radio, all the coverage is sport; cricket and tennis. The presenter tells a story about a player in the finals at Wimbledon. He had been on a special training diet for 18 months. During his match he began to crave some chocolate. His trainer was sent get him some. He broke 1 piece off the whole a bar and let it melt in his mouth. And went back to play. The radio presenter comments, "How can a man with that will power fail to win!" I laugh at my own lack of will power when it comes to chocolate.

9.00am I find a slug in my sock. My son's current obsession is tiny plastic creatures, particularly insects.

He likes to carry cockroaches and spiders in his pockets. I take the washing out of the machine and hang it up in the garden, everything is still damp from the storm yesterday and the air is fresh. My son yells that he needs a poo, so I go in and put him on the toilet with a Lego magazine.

10.30am I attempt and paint a border to a painting I'm working on, but my son keeps coming in the kitchen asking questions and I can't concentrate. I give up. I've made a mess and I'm annoyed at myself. I put another load of washing on and get us both ready to go out. We brush our teeth twice.

11.30am I hang up the second load of washing. We leave the house and walk to the bus stop. My son is picking up stones from the side of the road. He picks up a large rock and asks if he can bring it with us on the bus—I say, "Only if it has a bus ticket," he replies, "It can borrow yours mum"—I say, "If the rock uses my bus ticket who will look after you at the dentist?" He puts the rock back on the ground. At the bus stop he asks, "Do squids eat penguins?" I say, "If they can catch them, sure." He replies, "Yes, I already know but I was checking."

11.55am The bus arrives. My son is disappointed it's not one of the new double decker buses. We get on and my son runs to the seats at the very back. We look out the windows together on our journey.

12.30pm We go to supermarket and get croissant and a cheese scone for our lunch, my son is given a free banana. We are early for our appointment so we walk through the hospital so we can ride the long escalators. There is a volunteer playing live on a grand piano in the foyer.

1.30pm At the dentist “Bee Movie” is playing on a TV in the waiting room, this makes my son happy. The dental nurse comes and gets us, and we go into treatment room. The dentist asks my son to get up on the chair. He looks so little but talks with the dentist and answers when she asks him questions about his teeth. I can’t believe how grown up he is, I feel very proud of him. His teeth are all good, no signs of decay and well-spaced. I am relieved.

3pm After our lunch we look around the charity shops and find a cool bag of plastic spiders. My husband calls me to say he is finishing work early and can come pick us up before he goes for a swim.

4pm My husband drops my son and I back home. I bring in the washing from the garden. My son is playing with his new spiders. I start making our dinner.

5pm I run a bath for my son and put him in. Then I fold the washing and tidy up. My husband comes home and takes over bathing our son so I can finish preparing dinner.

6.30pm My husband cleans up the kitchen while I put our son to bed. We look for Scallop, his soft

hammerhead shark. I read him 3 stories and then turn off the lights and put on his bedtime CD. I snuggle up with him and he falls asleep as song #9 plays. It’s 7pm. I have shower then sit down to watch the news.

7.40pm Our son wakes up very suddenly, he is crying. My husband tries to calm him down, but he is inconsolable. We think he says his head hurts or his knee! I go to the kitchen and fill a syringe with Pamol. He refuses to take it—so I lie down with him and hold him close. He falls back to sleep.

8.30pm My husband makes a pot of tea (we are doing dry July). We watch two episodes of “Harlots” while sharing a bar of chocolate.

11pm Get in to bed.

+

6am: Wake up and stretch out my foot so I can bear to step on the floor (working constantly on healing plantar fasciitis that I developed running to relieve stress when my mother was dying 6 months ago). Let puppy out of crate and walk her.

6:30am–7:30am: Read the news, answer emails, laugh at puppy antics.

7:30am: Make eggs and wash up, take pup out again.

8:30am: Wake up 16 year old son and ask him to care for the puppy while I run errands. I am responding to a request from my husband to gather info.

10am: Return home but youngest son has fallen asleep again with pup in bed and so I take out the puppy. Son wakes up and agrees to stay awake this time and care for the puppy. I go to the studio downtown I share with another female artist friend of mine. I work on two sculptures and listen to music as well as get an iced coffee.

noon: Head home and have lunch and catch up with my son about the day and what time he's heading to work tomorrow. We are both on summer vacation from school and thoroughly enjoying it. Older boy is away with husband. Text older boy and he texts back an update of his comings and goings and also how his girlfriend is doing.

2pm: Youngest boy takes pup again and I head back down to the studio and find that my studio mate's clay sculpture has exploded in the kiln and so I help her glue it together as well as catch up with my other studio mate who I rarely see but who is young and delightful and absolutely hilarious. I get very little work done on my sculptures but three pieces I get out of the kiln are thankfully fine and so I unload those and put them on my work table to paint.

4pm: Hit the post office in completion of errands run earlier, send husband some paperwork overnight express.

4:20pm: Think of my mom and feel malaise/deep, low grade sad but also think that she probably would worry about my sculptures I started today being too

confrontational and counter cultural so in a way, I'm happy not to be stressing her out.

4:30pm: Return to an empty house, my son has the pup at the dog park so I do some foot stretches and ice it, then clean the house a bit.

5:30pm: Son returns home, I feed the dog and talk to my son about bands coming to town, we listen to their music on apple music to see if we want to go together to any concerts and we decide on Gregory Alan Isakov. Call my dad to see how he is feeling as he was also diagnosed with cancer but his is very slow growing and the doctors don't seem concerned.

6pm: Son complains that his legs are hurting from running and he goes to take a shower which he thinks will help—he's suddenly super grumpy—I leave him alone but tell him I'm sorry he's feeling bad. I take puppy outside again. Son comes back downstairs and is going for another run in the hopes it'll help his legs. We discuss how to make polenta and what polenta even is. Dog barks as son runs from the house.

7:30pm: Cook dinner and make a gigantic salad. Take pup for a long walk. She swallows something long, dark and unrecognizable before I can get her to drop it. I tell myself it was a worm so as not to think of what worse it might have been. Reminded of when I had to swipe a cigarette butt out of my son's mouth at the park when he was one and a half.

8:45pm: Do some research online regarding sources for imagery I need for one of the sculptures I'm working

on. Determine what time my son needs a ride to work tomorrow. Feeling very excited to get back into the studio.

9:30pm: Watch a film with my son who is now old enough to understand irony etc.... Working through the Coen Brothers.

+

1.36 The dog is barking. I get up to let him out.

7.10 The alarm goes off. I think about how tired and grouchy everyone will be after a weekend's camping. And about the dog.

7.12 I hear my older daughter shouting, "It's activities week," and get up and get dressed.

7.17 I go downstairs and give the dog a fuss. He's lying on the doorstep shivering, and falls over as he gets up.

7.25 My younger daughter gets up and says she is cold. I go up and get her dressing gown.

7.30 I look in the fridge to see if there's anything useful in there. I close it again.

7.45 I make the girls' snacks and lunch for my elder daughter.

7.50 I try to break up a grumbly argument. I fail.

8.05 Give the girls their breakfast.

8.07 Grab a slice of bread and butter. Bickering ongoing.

8.23 I can't find my shoes.

8.25 I find my shoes.

8.30 Other half and elder daughter head out towards school. As they leave I run after them and spray sun block on her. She shouts at me. I tell her I love her and I'll see her later.

8.32 Little one and I head out.

8.33 I run back for sun cream.

8.46 We get to school, only one minute late. I put sun cream on daughter before she goes into school.

8.50 I talk to friends, and end up crying on their shoulders about the dog.

9.10 I get home.

9.15 Take the dog for a little potter. Get back at 10.00. We didn't go far. Met a few neighbors on the way, and felt embarrassed at the state of me, so had to explain, which made me cry.

10.00 Call my mum.

10.22 Call the vet and arrange for them to come and put the dog down in two days' time.

10.31 Call my mum again, crying.

10.34 Think about texting my husband to tell him about the vet and the dog, but don't because he's in a meeting and it wouldn't help. Think I must buy more tissues. And something nice for the dog to eat. And the children some dinner. But I'm too teary, and decide to go to the studio for a bit instead. Then think I really ought to have something to feed the children, and go shopping.

12.04 I come home and unpack the shopping, have a bite for lunch.

12.11 I text my mother-in-law with times she can come over this week.

12.20 Take the dog his lunch.

12.21 I head to my studio via the community shop, where I discuss the volunteer rota for the shop stall at our local music festival this Saturday.

12.36 I get to the studio and start painting.

13.08 I look at the time and realize I'd better think about cleaning up.

13.18 I talk to my mum again and start walking to school.

13.29 Get to school to help out at Activities Week—today it's glockenspiel with the group that has my elder daughter in it.

13.31 On way into Year 1 classroom ask the school administrator if I can pick the girls up early on Wednesday to take them to my parents' to bury the dog.

I can hardly get the words out. She says that'll be fine. I don't think she dared say otherwise for fear of me totally collapsing on her.

15.00 Finish helping out, glockenspiel ringing in my ears. Mostly in a good way. They used a pentatonic scale to make it less of a cacophony.

15.10 Little one comes out, gives me a hug, presents me with her report, and points out bigger one, who's out early and is grumpy that I wasn't waiting for her. We head down the hill towards home.

15.15 My elder daughter tells me she didn't eat her lunchtime yoghurt, and before I have time to say she needs to eat her lunch, informs me triumphantly that I'd forgotten to give her a spoon.

15.16 They want to know what their reports say, so I skim them and decide they're safe to share, so read them a bit. They're pleased.

15.35 Get home to find the big girl, who'd made it back a few minutes before me, has let the chickens out. They need a run, but time is tight and after I've got together a snack and swimming things run around herding chickens back into their run.

16.01 Finally get us on the road towards the older girl's musical theatre class ahead of swimming lessons for them both (it is our busy day today). It has already started by the time we step out of the front gate.

16.10 Play games with the little one as she eats her snack, while the bigger one sings next door.

16.39 The class comes out, a bit late and we zoom (within the speed limit) off to the other side of Stroud for swimming, but the traffic is bad, and by the time we get there, the class has started. I sit and watch them swim. The little one is fearless and smiley, the bigger one takes it all a bit more seriously.

17.30 Swimming ends and we get changed. They play with a friend outside, and then ask why she has a bike and they don't have proper ones. The little one asks if I can get her a bike this evening, and says not to worry about how to pay, she has at least 25 coins in her purse, and two of them are silver.

18.22 We get home after a small diversion as the road is closed.

18.23 I put on pan of water for potatoes for supper.

18.24 I go and get little one's potty as it's been, "Such a tiring day," she can't face going all the way upstairs.

18.27 Help bigger daughter try on new school shoes that I had ordered online. I think they fit ok.

18.30 Start making dinner.

18.44 Check emails and reply to one.

18.50 Wonder if I'm doing the right thing. The dog seems perky. Then he falls over and smashes his chin on the floor. But still....

18.57 Burn my boob with boiling water (twice) trying to see if the corn on the cob is cooked (two cobs).

19.01 Give the girls their dinner. Spend the next fifteen minutes getting drinks for people, and trying to stop the dog stealing food from the girls, who are having dinner in front of the TV as a post swimming treat. He gets some sweetcorn.

19.20 Eat my dinner on the move, flitting about. Am aware that we are late, people are tired, and we still have to have a bath to wash off the chlorine from Stroud's most disgusting swimming pool. Brace myself. Get up and look around. The house looks like some sort of explosion has occurred.

19.30 Bath time, and everything quickly unravels, as I wash hair and an elbow hits a blister, there is screeching and splashing and shouting and pinching. As I lift the little one out of the bath, I accidentally pinch her under the arm, and she runs crying from the room. I go after her, wrap her in a towel and give her a hug. She calls me the "worst mummy ever," but quickly perks up and goes off to choose a story while I get her milk. I read her a story, take her for a pee, read her another quick story (squeals of indignation when she realizes her big sister has come to join us), and tuck her up to look at a couple

of books while my big girl and I put the chickens to bed, giving them the left over corn cobs, which they love.

20.31 Do little one's teeth and finally get her off to bed.

20.45 Tidy up while the big girl is reading a story to herself, then read her a story, do her teeth and tuck her up. Wonder briefly about how to get ready for going away on holiday on Sunday what with everything else that has to happen this week. I have no idea what to take with me. We're going to Finland with friends, staying in huts. I think I have to buy things, but what, apart from bug repellent?

21.01 My other half gets home earlier than I was expecting.

21.05 I text a friend to say thanks for the massive bag of hand me downs I found on the doorstep on Sunday.

21.16 Snuggle up with big girl until she's asleep, as she's worried about the dog.

22.04 Talk about dog euthanasia with my husband, and decide we should see how he is in the morning, as he has seemed happy today. We talk about the not so brilliant first advisory board meeting of his small space startup company.

22.47 We turn off the light, and go to sleep.

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Midnight to 5 am Wake off and on—slept in living room to not wake my partner MB when my alarm goes off. QS is asleep, making small deep breathing noises. He prefers sleeping close to me (has since birth), experiences nighttime anxiety. He came downstairs in the night to sleep on the couch.

5 am Get up from recliner: sore neck and shoulders, hands shaking a bit as I slept at an odd angle, and my heart rate feels unsteady. My body is angry. Drop brand new phone I just bought yesterday to replace the phone I broke because I dropped it.

530 am Shower, start Pandora (Neil Young channel) on my phone which I set on a high shelf. Watch as batches of my long hair go down the drain. Add rosemary to my scalp to discourage hair loss. Get dressed in the dark as to not wake MB—he is now out cold/fell asleep in his clothes on top of a blanket.

615 am Put on green tee-shirt and jeans with elastic band, notice everything is bloated. My arthritis is flaring up this morning, so pulling the jeans up and on is difficult and causes me deep pain in my hands which is discouraging. I walk out the back door, right into a garden spider web. Drive seven blocks to work (I'm assistant director at an international residency program for artists, writers and composers) in the rusty van, borrowed as both of our vehicles are having issues. Arrive at work, still picking pieces of webbing off my shirt as I walk in the door.

637 am Check email accounts, start YouTube (Gary Numan/new wave mix). Our cleaning professional quit recently so I took over her duties/hours: leave my desk to clean the staff kitchen, public bathrooms by the gallery. Realize it is way too early to do much else; I will wake our two current residents if I turn the vacuum on.

7–9 am Give two newly-arrived residents tours of the facility, apartments, and studios. They talk excitedly about starting their residencies. Confirm QS's therapy appointment for tomorrow via text. Check to see if he texted yet to tell me he is awake/check in. MA, MI and DB are visiting their aunt this week—feels odd to not be making plans for them for the day. Check email, begin work on ongoing publicity tasks. Lower back screams at me due to weekend cleaning and spending time in the recliner—I ignore it.

915 am Attempt to meditate for a few minutes, struggle to focus/hard to take a break. Noticing. Realizing how hard it is for me to pace myself lately and I have panicky flutters in my chest every time I try to slow down, or (now) the flutters evolve into moments of solid pain. It passes.

926 am Receive text—our daughter MA's therapy is scheduled. In reaction to recent stress/worrying about her mother's recent loss of her home, MA has started cutting again, something she had not done for a year. I text my mom and apologize for forgetting to empty her dehumidifier when she was out of town on Friday.

934 am Realize I really need to pee, and like so many times lately, realize that I am not sure how long I have needed to go.

934 am Start writing something in my planner, tell myself to stop as I need to go to the bathroom before I do a single other thing. Not sure why I seem to do these things to myself—wait to pee, wait to do things I need to do for me.

937 am Realize I have not taken any of my medicine or vitamins or inhalers yet. Doing that now. Just finished oatmeal that I put in the microwave hours ago, and it was getting a little cemented.

943 am Open mail. I read a letter stating MI's MRI and neurologist appointment has to be rescheduled—we have been trying to get him in for 6 months after he had a febrile seizure. MB lets me know we have a new appointment set—upset about the delay.

1125 am Take an artist grocery shopping, apologize for the bucket full of drills and saws that are blocking her from extending her legs in the van. She laughs, tells me she and her husband farmed for years, during which they drove a 1980 van that had no seats, so they procured some random seats from a local junkyard and bolted them into the floor.

109 pm Practice eating lunch with my left hand. Call nutritionist (doctor-prescribed), talk about how much I compulsively ate over the weekend. Check in with QS

at home, he says he is “reading and chilling.” Look up nutritional info for lunch components and write them down in food log.

121 pm Print a few poem drafts I sent to my gmail yesterday, edit one. Sent edits to MB. Ask if he thinks it is too harsh (brutal topic). Do a quick sketch, a painting idea that surfaced while I was editing the poem. Promise myself I will go to my studio downtown after work/errands, no matter how tired I am. Happy I carved out a small break to pick out things to work on later.

230 pm Drive to eye doctor, order contacts, schedule checkups for kids.

245 pm Take bucket of drills to hardware store, explain that my mother and I don’t know where dad put the charging bases for the drills, and unfortunately cannot ask him now. Older employee who helps me is kind.

3 pm Head home, watch “Downton Abbey” with QS who is now feeling sick. We both curl up in the recliners and nap for a bit after snacks.

5 pm MB gets home from work, makes us dinner, I set timers in case I fall asleep. He leaves for a comedy open mic—I want to be awake when he comes home. Starting to feel shaky and overheated. Eating is making it worse, I don’t want to hurt MB’s feelings—I say nothing about dinner making me feel sick. QS and I hang out in the living room for the rest of the evening. I drift in and out.

901 pm Wake up with a start, in the recliner, sweaty and visibly shaking. It’s necessary for me to nap occasionally but I’ve been out for hours. QS is happily listening to vines on his phone, he reports, bobbing his feet to the beat of something. “Brooklyn 99” is still on. I tell him he needs to plan active projects for tomorrow even if he is not feeling the best, and he grunts at me. Answer two texts from residents I missed while asleep. Apologize profusely—one locked himself out after leaving to video a chimney swift colony at the nearby historic building. I guide him to where to find the spare keys, he gets safely inside.

930 pm Start a load of laundry. Tell QS he needs to try to sleep soon (summer bedtimes are less strict)—we giggle about him looking burrito-like in his blanket, laugh about something that happens on the show. I am inwardly rumbling, upset—I had wanted to go to my studio this afternoon. I now realize it’s too late to really get much done even if I was feeling well enough to go, which I’m not.

1030 pm Think about submitting my food log but am ashamed that, in a pattern present lately, I did excellent until I got home for the evening, then blew it: ate too much, ate even when I was feeling horribly full. Neglect to send check-in email to nutritionist; I just cannot bring myself to write it. MB gets home. We watch TV together after he picks me up gas station snacks. I promise myself I will not eat all of them and even

say it aloud to MB, as I already ate beyond my desired amount, but end up eating almost all of it anyway.

11:45 pm Realize I did not text back my oldest son JM and his wife H, who live 35 miles away. I feel bad, but am worried about waking them up if they happen to be asleep; I do not want to invade. MB stands up. I had promised myself I was going to try to sleep with him upstairs tonight but I don't feel right. He hugs me and heads to our bedroom. I think about following him but instead hit play on the remote and start another episode of "Brooklyn 99."

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12:08am C cries, I wake, pat him back to sleep.

1:20am C kicks me in his sleep.

3:05am C cries and crawls onto me, falls back asleep.

4:58am C wakes, asking to nurse "Na, na," clutching at my chest. I nurse him.

5:10am Finishes nursing, we fall back asleep.

7:36am Garbage truck wakes us. C asks again to nurse, I say, "All gone."

7:37am C gets up and walks out of the room. He plays with M & B.

7:54am Diaper change & new clothes.

8:07am S wakes up, comes out of his room all dressed.

I get him a bowl of Cheerios & blueberries. C & S sit at the table together and eat blueberries.

8:20am B makes bacon. M makes toast. S mixes eggs then drives cars on the kitchen floor. I hold C and pour coffee.

8:31am S spits out a bite of egg. C follows his example.

9:00am Move car seats into the other car, getting ready for the zoo.

9:21am Cut up apples for snack, pack water bottles, diaper bag. S turns on pop radio and sits listening.

9:34am I tell S to brush his hair and give him my brush.

9:38am I find S brushing C's hair. C is standing looking zoned out and happy.

9:39am Sit down and give C a quick snack of mommy milk.

9:47am Get in the car.

9:58am On my phone, post to my mama musician Facebook group. C eats apples. I eat a granola bar. S talks about cars.

10:36am Arrive at the zoo. "I want to go on the train!" S shouts over and over. "Now!"

10:47am Put on sunscreen while standing by the flamingos. C fussing. Put him on my back. Warthog. Lions.

11:26am S climbs into the stroller and drags C onto his lap.

11:49am Diaper change while C spits and grabs at his diaper.

12:05pm M watches C while I pee alone.

12:10pm Wait in line. S asks for cup of ice for C. C fusses while we wait. S begs for french fries and makes weird noises at C.

12:46pm Finish lunch. S pushes stroller. Keeps asking for stuffed wolf from the store.

12:55pm Take photo of S posed with buffalo statue. C falls asleep in stroller.

1:14pm S playing with his tooth. "I'm about to lose it any second!" We watch the bears.

1:53pm Sister calls, having a hard time. I step away and talk with her by the bald eagle.

2:00pm S pulls out his tooth!

2:18pm C still sleeping. Buy S the stuffed wolf. He names it "Tooth."

2:28pm S & M go to ride the train. I sit with B in the shade. C still sleeping. My father talks to me about S & C and jealousy. I might feel judged by him, but mostly I am grateful for his thoughts.

2:55pm C wakes up and nurses.

3:10pm S & M finish train ride. We leave the zoo and walk to the car. S says he needs to pee. I walk him to the bushes on the side of the parking lot.

3:18pm In the car S holds his new stuffed wolf. C blows raspberries in the air.

3:22pm C makes squishy face and points to his diaper.

"Is it squishy?" I ask. He laughs. "We'll get a new one when we get home," I tell him. He wiggles his tongue and grabs his boot.

3:42pm Home. "Ice cream!" demands S. I take off C's & my boots.

3:48pm I pee, then catch C and take him to do a diaper change. He runs away while I'm setting up the changing station. I carry him back.

3:49pm S is having ice cream.

4:00pm We all have ice cream except I give C blueberries and try to pretend I'm eating them too.

4:04pm C is stinky and needs another diaper change.

M & S are reading "Jack & the Beanstalk." While I'm setting up the changing station C walks in with a wolf puppet on one hand and a zebra in the other.

4:28pm I ask M for crayons but she can't find them so I get our colored pencils from the car and sit C in his high chair with a blank paper & the pencils.

4:32pm I try to inconspicuously check email on my phone. I write back my listening partner who is needing to reschedule.

4:39pm C is throwing pencils on the floor and wanting to get down. As I pick him up he dives for my chest asking to nurse again.

4:45pm M says she needs a rest. I deeply wish I could take one too. Instead I take the kids to the park and sit on a bench, then get up when C climbs up near the tall slide. I watch S interact with two girls who are trying to push him off the monkey bars, then throw his new stuffed wolf aside. He picks it up and walks away. We go home and order pizza.

5:36pm S & M go to look at the neighbor's Tesla. I feed C a peach.

5:52pm I read a few pages of one of M's books. S barges into the room bright eyed and breathless to tell me all about the Tesla.

5:55pm S, M & B go to pick up the pizza. I sit with C at the piano bench and start to play. C knocks photos off the piano.

6:02pm We call husband/dad for FaceTime. C has another stinky diaper and is fussy.

6:20pm Change diaper but no poop. S is loudly banging on the piano. I feel tired and annoyed.

6:22pm We all go downstairs to watch a movie and eat pizza.

7:00pm C asks for water and goes upstairs. I follow and don't let him go back down. I hold him and inhale his head as he looks at books.

7:06pm C plays with animals, lion and giraffe. "Doo doo doo," he says, making them march along, one in each hand.

7:10pm I sneak a cookie from the cupboard, making sure C doesn't see.

7:11pm C has pooped. He makes noises and rubs his eyes as I change his diaper.

7:40pm Wash his hands, feet and face, then lie down with C to nurse. It feels so good to lie down.

7:53pm C gets up. Not asleep. He lies down again. I put him on my chest and rub his back. He fusses and pulls away.

8:02pm C goes upstairs to the bathroom, gets a tissue and practices blowing his nose, full body fold.

8:03pm I take him downstairs to the living room and tell him he can play there.

8:10pm I lie down with him again, rocking, massaging, tickling. He is still not asleep.

8:20pm M, B & S come up from the movie. C gets up and walks out to them. M rocks C while I help S write a letter to the tooth fairy. He asks to keep his tooth.

We say goodnight to everyone and I take C to bed and tell him he can't get up anymore. Rub his back, sing more lullabies.

8:53pm C asleep at last. M is reading to S. I skim Facebook.

9:20pm Take S to bed and sit with him.

9:45pm S is asleep. I sit in the rocking chair and meditate.

9:50pm Brush teeth and floss.

9:55pm Get the tea I made earlier, now cold. Sit in living room with M & B.

10:28pm Tooth fairy delivery.

10:30pm Add extra blanket to C. Get into bed.

10:47pm Through the open window, listen to neighbors loudly washing dishes. Sleep.

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12.04am Wake to son (2 years). He's wet through. Give a bottle, have a cuddle and resettle. Fall asleep holding him on couch in his room.

12.45 Get back in bed.

5.00 Wake up to coughing daughter (5 years) Give her meds.

5.20 Get back in bed.

5.30 Put on vaporizer and give Ventolin.

8.35 Get up. Have headache and head cold. Both kids sick with head cold and cough too.

8.48 Set kids up with paper and crayons.

9.05 Make son muesli and yoghurt.

9.07 Put bread in toaster.

9.10 Son refuses muesli. Throws crayons and drink bottle on floor. Drink coffee made by husband.

9.15 Walk to the back room for a basket of toys.

9.16 Come back to find son has climbed up onto kitchen bench. Remove him from precarious heights and give new toys.

9.17 Daughter continues to use up all the printer paper in the house drawing with crayons.

9.20 Reheat toast for “starving” daughter.

9.22 Give kids bowls and wooden spoons to bang so I can butter toast in “peace.”

9.23 Can’t open damn jam jar. Don gloves and run hot water. Curse. Reheat toast for 4th time.

9.25 Finally serve toast to daughter. Son wants some. He refuses to go in his high chair. Wants to sit on bench stool like sister. Quietly freak out.

9.29 Take phone call about work. New toys tipped all over floor and kids fighting over a toy spanner. Daughter sneezes snot onto floor. Wipe snot. Needs band aid for cuticle on finger.

9.38 Turn on baby shark music then Justine Clarke.

9.43 Make toast for me.

9.56 Make coffee again. Son tries to help. Ground coffee spilt everywhere. Wipe daughters snot.

10.00 Give threading activities with colored pasta and beads. Neither kid interested. Beads and pasta all over floor. Extract pasta from son’s mouth.

10.16 House trashed. Put on TV. Set up toy kitchen in front of TV.

10.30 Escape for shower while husband watches kids. Check emails, Instagram, Facebook and hangouts in bathroom before shower. Hope husband sorts kitchen.

10.45 Dress, put on basic makeup, blow dry fringe and hope for the best with the rest of my hair. Realize that documenting my day like this is keeping me very present. Like meditating. Contemplate taking kids outside for kindling (freezing) or to local gallery café.

10.50 Emerge from bathroom feeling mildly more human. Hubby has changed poo nappy. Kitchen still a mess. Put slippers on son. Decide against going out to gallery café too close to lunch time. Contemplate what to make for lunch.

10.54 Son has taken off slippers again. Start unpacking dishwasher. Decide kids need to go outside. Stop unpacking dishwasher.

11.00 Don jackets and scarves and shoes. Head outside for kindling and to clean cubby house. Kids let chooks out and check for eggs. No eggs.

11.19 Cleaning cubby house of dirt and leaves. Son bolts off. Find him in chook-house looking for eggs. Feel something in my gumboot. Find sharp screw. Put in pocket until can find bin. Pick up garbage smooshed in mud in back yard.

11.25 Give kids a trike to ride down hill.

11.35 Finish sweeping out cubby. Bang head on roof. Curse.

11.40 Daughter stuck in climbing ropes tied between trees. Extract her feet.

11.44 Collect big fallen branches from gums after big winds last night for firewood. Kids play on concrete sculptures husband made. Leave branches in piles. Need wheel barrow.

11.52 Head inside for lunch. Put sharp screw in bin. Chasten husband for leaving poo nappy bags next to bin instead of IN bin. Throw chickens some dried corn.

11.56 Son bolts for chook coup again in his socks. Check for eggs again. No eggs. Finally inside. Son pulls

off socks. Husband calling me to look at something. Feeling harangued and hungry. Son finds piece of jam toast on ground from breakfast and walks off eating it.

11.59 Watch video I sent husband of daughter aged one playing xylophone. Hang coat. Move artwork in office higher so son doesn't break it. Look for phone charger.

12.09pm Put on chicken noodles. Talk about the temperature of sun and moon with daughter.

12.10 Serve entirely healthy and virtuous packet noodles to fretful son and add chicken bone broth cube from freezer for some nutritious benefit.

12.11 Cook own noodles. Burn finger. Curse. Run finger under water. Give kids drink water. Run finger under tap again. Feel guilty about non-nutritious lunch.

12.20 Eat. Starving. Feel slightly better. Headache gone but fingers sting like hell after burning on fork in hot water. Simply not thinking straight after headache and broken sleep.

12.22 Husband comes along wanting lunch. I ask him to wait and help me. He takes son and asks for bottle for son. Move dirty dishes to make room to wash up bottle.

12.25 Make bottle.

12.29 Husband changes son and puts down for bed with bottle.

12.33 Respond to messages. Help daughter unravel plastic wrapped newspaper. Contemplate how wasteful that is.

12.38 Set up daughter with iPad and ABC kids.

12.40 Whinge to husband about headache/fibromyalgia pain and burnt fingers and mess. Cry. Regret putting on mascara. Talk about some other things. Argue over why I should tidy up now not later and about the fact I feel overwhelmed by the chaos.

12.42 Bathroom stop.

12.46 Check email. See the bill reminders I need to pay. Check Instagram briefly. Feel pissed off and exhausted. Realize exhaustion due to cold and recent pneumonia. Go back to unpacking dishwasher.

12.51 Dishwasher finally unpacked.

12.52 Restack dishwasher. Enjoy sunshine on my face through the window and a moment of quietness.

12.58 Wipe noodles and crayon off bench top. Crayon may need a bit more elbow grease. Make a mental note to sort later. Clean fingerprints off glasses. Throw a toastie on for husband.

1.06 Gather things to head out door for specialist appointment. Nearly hit a magpie on the drive there.

1.25 Get to specialist. Take daughter to bathroom. Run into friend.

2.20 Leave specialist having had to book daughter in for grommets and tonsillectomy and cancel ski trip. Cry. Regret wearing mascara again.

2.30 Ring mother-in-law to tell her daughter can't go away on the planned holiday.

2.40 Drive home.

3:00 Arrive home. Ring mum. Set daughter up on iPad.

3.15 Make a toasted sandwich.

3.23 Chat with husband re plans for daughters tonsillectomy/adenoidectomy and grommets.

3.45 Make chicken broth soup for daughter and husband. Cut up apple. Give her a biscuit and nuts too.

3.58 Pay bills. Stare at phone. Daughter still on iPad. Son still asleep.

4.00 Go for a walk outside. Put chooks away.

4.08 Go to husband's shed and talk some more. Daughter comes looking for us.

4.24 Go inside.

4.38 Finish packing dishwasher and put on.

4.42 Call sister-in-law.

5.14 Daughter wants shower. Put her in.

5.16 Eat takeaway. Healthy nutritious day. Feel guilty and exhausted. Son doesn't eat much.

5.27 Add him into bath.

5.40 Husband gets daughter from bath. Sit with son.

5.46 Get son from bath and dress him. Put slippers on him. Again.

5.55 Sweep floor.

6.13 Play wrestle son.

6.22 Make beds.

6.25 Go for another shower. Online clothes shop while hiding in bathroom.

6.45 Quickly blow dry hair.

6.54 Call mum about something else.

7.15 Watch "Little Princess." Cuddle daughter. Stop son from falling off furniture. Husband makes children fruit and yoghurt for dessert.

7.25 Clean children's teeth. Wipe son's gunky eye and apply Chlorsig.

7.35 Put on Trolls/Moana songs for kids to dance to.

7.43 Get in bed and leave husband to put kids to bed.

11.23 Wake up to daughter. Give medicine.

11.38 Back to bed.

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12:04am I wake out of a very light sleep to kids talking, "The cat peed on R's bed!"

12:08am I ask the kids to please be quiet so I can sleep.

12:14am Baking soda. R and A ask for more advice on cleaning up the cat pee. Awake for another hour trying to calm my mind, busy with all that needs attention tomorrow and for the coming week.

5:55am Alarm.

6:00am Alarm snooze.

6:10am Wake up to last alarm.

6:20am Cat wakes me up, check phone (social media, email, GPS—new train route begins today). Feed cats, get ready for work, listen to talk radio conversation about immigration/ICE raids, finish yesterday's coffee. Take a picture of kids sleeping in my studio, kiss them goodbye.

7:11am Leave house, walk 17 minutes to blue line train, miss first train, check GPS again.

7:34am Hop on next train.

7:35am Check email, social media, and to-do list.

8:10am Arrive at work, get situated.

8:17am Back in classroom ready to start class.

8:40am Class critique.

9:44am Intro to new project, students working independently. Answer emails, update

- calendar, plan for upcoming exhibitions, edit agenda for tonight's meeting.
- 10:28am Vending machine food for lunch because I ran out this morning without packing lunch.
- 10:35am Text R and A to check-in. Reply to landlord about broken air conditioners. Reply to N regarding A babysitting for her tomorrow and going to the pool. Prep for next class.
- 10:50am 2nd period design class starts. Repeat activities from first class.
- 12:40pm Class is working independently. Researching install supplies online for upcoming show, check social media, wish I brought a lunch, R and A text that they are doing chores.
- 12:42pm Thinking about how to effectively talk to the kids tonight about how the privilege of staying up late means they must let me sleep and only wake me if there's an emergency. Boundaries.
- 12:44pm Deep breath. Organize budget.
- 12:59pm Step out of class to answer son's call.
- 1:03pm Class ending, focus on budget for 10–15 minutes.
- 1:18pm Check in with S to fix computer access issue for company marketing platform for designing email templates. Run into RK and give Disney vacation advice, talk about California road trips.

- 2:10pm Back in empty classroom, call JV 10 minutes late to discuss freelance design work. While on work call daughter calls and texts telling me R no longer wants to try out for the dance team. Receive text update from landlord, guy is coming to fix AC units tomorrow. Glance at email while still on call to see that one of my favorite former professors will attend my upcoming show and performance with my kids. I get butterflies.
- 3:02pm Call daughter to check-in.
- 3:15pm Type up quote and notes for freelance job. Try to briefly focus on budget. Drink water.
- 3:14pm Did not budget, instead researched industry standards for print design quote, check social media, pack up.
- 3:49pm Get on train. Woman offers another woman bandages and Neosporin for her bleeding knee.
- 4:34pm Walk home. Quiet time. Hot.
- 4:52pm Home. Check-in with kids.
- 5:00pm Start load of laundry. Wait, neighbor is doing laundry.
- 5:10pm Call mom. Have a beer, turkey sandwich, and grapefruit. Catch up with mom, get parenting advice on raising feisty teenage daughter.

- 5:34pm Watch TV on my phone, try to nap in studio where air conditioning works.
- 6:30pm Start dinner.
- 6:50pm Try to start laundry again, run into neighbor, help neighbor try to find source of water leak in basement. Hide self consciousness brought on by being in pj's with hairy legs, no bra, rough feet, hot and sweaty while cute neighbor shines flashlight near me to locate leak.
- 7:10pm Join Skype meeting 9 minutes late, group planning and troubleshooting for exhibition a few weeks away. After meeting stay on call with K to talk about her staying with us for a week during the exhibition.
- 8:31pm Reheat dinner.
- 8:54pm Watch news while brushing cat, straighten up. See if neighbor is finished with laundry, they are not. Tell kids plan for tomorrow, help daughter cut her toenails. Take shower. Laundry is now open, start a load, realize the leak is coming down strong, the source is my shower drain.
- 10:34pm Text landlord video of leak, answer landlord's call. 2nd shower can not be used until fixed.
- 10:50pm Walk in living room and see giant scratches on wood floor from son moving sculpture to vacuum. Show him and talk about damage.
- 10:54pm Cross today off calendar.

- 10:55pm Lay down. A enters room. Talk with A about boundaries and the need to respect my need to sleep and only wake me up in case of emergencies. A asks, "If we were robbed? If I have a bad dream? If the cats are sick? If the fish dies? If I get my period should I wake you up?"
- 11:09pm Set alarms. Listen to news. Get comfortable and close eyes.
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- 12.00am Sleeping.
- 12.45am Son (15 months) wakes up, husband goes to give him a cuddle while I stay in bed.
- 6.00am Wake up, cuddle husband ask how he's feeling.
- 6.02am Get up, shower, wash hair, make self presentable for first teaching day of second semester. No time to shave legs. F*ck the patriarchy.
- 6.30am Kiss husband goodbye as he leaves for work.
- 6.32am Hear baby coughing in bed, hope he will be ok until I finish getting everything ready.
- 6.37am Make breakfast for me and baby, porridge with some peanut butter. Open curtains in living and dining rooms while it cooks.

6.43am Put son's bowl of porridge in freezer to cool down quicker.

6.44am Get son up. Smother in cuddles and kisses. Eat breakfast together.

6.58am Clean table and wash dishes while holding baby who won't be put down.

7.09am Finish dressing baby in multiple layers of warm winter clothing, I keep offering small farm animals from a nearby shelf to encourage him to stay near me and get dressed. Realize while doing this that baby is actually a toddler now.

7.12am Grab my son's lunchbox from fridge and pack final items into carryall. Realize I've forgotten to make lunch for myself.

7.14am Walk out the door into light rain. Son wants to hold a container he found and starts climbing down the stairs while I put the bag in the car and race back to get him with an umbrella.

7.18am Check GPS for traffic and start the drive to daycare/work.

7.42am Arrive at parking garage. Stop to talk to Jeffy, who runs parking garage and has been away for a week. Son snuggles into my shoulder as we start the walk to daycare.

7.49am Realize we're too early for daycare drop off yet, so stop at my favorite café for a coffee. They kindly make a small warm milk for my son, with a marshmallow on the side. My son swipes plate off table and it smashes. I apologize.

8.09am Arrive at daycare. Unpack son's things. Lunch items into fridge. Sign in. Play for a little while and then make him a bottle, we cuddle while he drinks it. Make sure he's happily settled before leaving.

8.30am Leave daycare and head to office. Check classrooms are ready. Return to desk to do teaching prep. Check emails.

9.52am Computer randomly restarts itself for the third time, interrupting my work flow.

11.36am Race to get something for lunch. Ham and cheese croissant.

12.00pm Staff meeting.

12.43pm Staff meeting finishes. Do final prep for teaching. Fill my water bottle knowing that I'll be doing a lot of talking to our third year studio students, group of about 60.

1.00pm Start teaching.

3.59pm Finish teaching. Pleased with how it went. Was nervous to start with but settled into it once we were

underway. Quickly pack papers to review and laptop into carryall.

4.03pm Walk out of office.

4.06pm Arrive at carpark, throw stuff in the back seat, get in car, desperate to see my son.

4.10pm Arrive at daycare to collect my son. He doesn't see me at first, but when he hears me say, "Hello," turns quickly to run toward me with a grin. I miss him constantly when I'm at work. I smother him in cuddles and kisses. Spend some time talking to his caregiver about how his day was. He has a cough and didn't sleep or eat much today.

4.23pm Leave daycare, drive home.

4.35pm Son falls asleep in car.

4.45pm Arrive home. Unpack car while son sleeps.

4.50pm Gently take my son out of car and walk inside, then cuddle on couch while he wakes up a little more.

4.53pm Push my son in the swing outside while we wait for dad/husband to get home. He giggles and wriggles and loves it.

5.05pm Husband arrives home.

5.24pm Reheat leftover sausage and root vegetable bake made on Saturday. We all sit to eat together. Husband

and I split a beer. Son is tired and has a cold so spends most of dinner on dad's lap, also eating out of his bowl.

5.49pm Son goes to have a bath with dad while I make lunches, wash dinner dishes and lay out pajamas.

6.03pm Son hops out of bath and comes to see me in the kitchen for a cuddle before going to get into pajamas with dad.

6.16pm I fill the vaporizer for son's room, make his bottle and get out laptop and papers, ready to review while husband reads stories to son.

6.22pm I take our son into his warm dark room where we snuggle in the rocking chair while he drinks his bottle, I sing his goodnight song—"You Are My Sunshine"—before leaving him happily in bed to fall asleep.

6.31pm Sit down at the dining table to start doing some work.

6.33pm Take some time to text a friend then actually start working.

6.53pm Stop to look at the stories our son's caregiver at daycare has uploaded to his online storybook. Almost cry with pride at seeing him climbing over a new obstacle and the careful description his caregiver has written about how he went about mastering it.

7.00pm Get back to work.

8.00pm Take a short break to stretch and take folic acid and vitamins. Drink half warm cup of sleepy tea. Realize I'm probably not getting much, if any, downtime tonight as I still have a lot of work to do.

8.05pm Go to the toilet.

8.07pm Son wakes crying, husband goes to cuddle him while I keep working (but in a distracted way).

8.15pm Son is still crying. Teething maybe? We offer some pain relief but it's hard to get it into him. I stay to cuddle him. Husband comes to switch places so that I can keep working.

8.44pm I am back at dining table and son is quiet in the bedroom with husband.

8.57pm Son is crying again. Husband goes back in while I continue trying to work but just feel guilty instead.

9.02pm Son is quiet again. I keep working.

9.20pm I close laptop and pack carryall ready for tomorrow.

9.22pm Collapse onto couch next to husband. Bed is calling but need some connection time. Drink second cup of half warm sleepy tea.

9.45pm Go to bed. Have quick but excellent sex.

9.59pm Get up, shower.

10.11pm Go back to bed. Cat comes in and wants affection. Stupidly look at phone and get sucked into emails and social media.

10.22pm Put on meditation track. Hope to fall asleep quickly.

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6:43 iPhone alarm goes off. First one awake. 2-year-old's sound machine still hums. Husband sleeps with a t-shirt over his face. I scroll Instagram for 7 minutes.

7:08 Pour water into French press. Look at clock in an attempt to remember time so I don't over-brew.

7:22 Realize I have over-brewed.

7:34 Wake up 2-year-old for preschool. Make us a smoothie. "I DON'T WANT A GREEN SMOOTHIE I WANT A BLUE SMOOTHIE." I drink the green smoothie.

7:48 "He sounds happy," husband calls from upstairs. "Dad will make you a blue smoothie," I say. "I WANT MOM AND DAD TO COME TO SCHOOL." "We can't come to school, honey, school is just for kids."

7:55 Husband comes downstairs. I take my coffee upstairs to poop in peace.

7:59 Husband reads 2-year-old a book about preschool anxiety. "Am I taking him today?" I ask, "Whatever," he

says. “Well I have a meeting at 2:30 so I can’t pick him up.” He drew a dinosaur as tall as a tree. “Okay well can you take him then?” he asks.

8:03 In the shower I try to remember the last time I washed my hair and whether it’s pertinent that I wash it today.

8:20 I WANT TO LEAVE IN FIVE MINUTES. School is a 4-minute drive, during which 2-year-old cries and pleads for me to attend school with him. “I promise it will be fun,” I say. I fear he’s already developing anxiety and realize that my blank slate of a child is no longer blank.

8:30 Enter the school in screams. He tries to make a break for it, twice. All the teachers greet him enthusiastically. Realize I have that child, the one that requires all-hands-on-deck. His teacher picks him up for a hug and he flails violently. “Ow,” she says. “Ow.” I look to the aide knowing she will shoo me away, and I appreciate her permission. I exit the building sort of laugh-crying. His behavior is both devastating and comical.

8:35 Husband is editing on our back deck with a cup of coffee. I retreat upstairs to the office to write for an hour before I have to go to actually paying job.

10:20 Realize I forgot to transfer money between business checking accounts and swear repeatedly in an empty office at a list of overdraft fees.

10:45 Call bank and put phone on speaker. Hold music resonates through space.

11:00 Intern arrives. “I’m on hold with the bank,” I say. “Forever banking problems,” she says in a thick Russian accent.

11:35 Fifty minutes later, bank phone call resolves.

11:54 Consume a version of the same hummus sandwich I eat every day at work because I’m too broke to eat out and too exhausted to think of something new.

1:13 Look through new inventory and admire tote bag that says: “Smells Like Queer Spirit.” Wonder if it’s cultural appropriation if I carry it and don’t identify as queer. Or if it’s null considering the bag is appropriating Nirvana, who appropriated deodorant.

1:57 Email an editor to make sure she received edits I sent a week ago. She had to have received them; I am just looking for validation.

1:58 Leave work to drive to a meeting with new client. Swear in the empty car when my bare leg touches the summer-hot vinyl.

2:30 Client offers me gourmet munchkin-type pastries from a fancy bakery. I spend 25 minutes chatting online with a Quickbooks support person named Lex, while the client sits on an ottoman and explains the way her auntie has organized their receipts, which is, thankfully for me, meticulously.

3:12 We drive to the auntie's house two blocks away to pick up more receipts. Two small dogs jump around in the back yard like a flea circus. Auntie says she is making toast but it's really a hamburger bun; it smells fucking delicious. She's wearing what I can only describe as a funky deep purple and red floral moo-moo. The rest of her home echoes these same hues, with gold accents. She appears to be living a life of complete luxury. I accept her plastic bag of receipts and thank her for her meticulousness. "Oooh, a compliment," she says.

3:22 Check email in hot car. Editor has replied, "I did and I've had a chance to read through once. It's great and we're definitely moving forward. Sorry for my slow reply, it's just general business." She writes a second reply: "Oops, I meant to say general busy-ness. 'Business' sounds rude, ah. Haha." I feel part of a large mechanism of women moving through the world.

3:24–4:19 I get lost twice on the way home. Husband calls to tell me 2-year-old's teacher said it was his best day yet. He calls back to ask for the recipe for eco-friendly weed killer that a farmer friend gave me. He calls back again to ask if table salt is just regular salt.

4:20 Enjoy 14 minutes of alone time before family returns home.

4:36 2-year-old requests that I read him water-logged "Thomas the Train" book. Much of the language sounds dirty to me: Sodor, Bulstrode, Shunting. He skips the

last several pages and requests instead the DVD of Dinosaur Train we've borrowed from the library.

5:15 Make tacos: an unintentional weekly staple. I feel a wave of phantom pressure to be a better cook, or at least to apologize for the frequency of tacos, but I don't.

5:47 In an attempt to introduce something new, give 2-year-old a taco shell broken in half with cheese melted on top. He throws it across the room. A guttural sound emerges from my body: Heyyyyyyyyy. He looks on, trying to determine what will happen next. I drag him screaming to a chair in the corner of the dining room for a time-out. Thrown food is the hill I will die on. Husband eats tacos outside on the deck, observing with the indifference of a soldier at war.

6:40 Walk to local playground. One other family is there. Husband and I try to decide who the other husband looks like. "Sort of like that terrible guy on Mad Men," I say. "Harry Crane?" Yes, him. "The wife," I say, "looks like a younger version of that mother in JAWS whose son gets eaten off his raft." "I don't want to see that little Kintner boy get spilled all over the dock," husband replies, in character. 2-year-old throws handfuls of dirt into the sunlight.

7:18 As expected, 2-year-old refuses to walk home. I carry him on my hip, his clothes dripping wet from the summer fountain.

7:32 Husband bathes 2-year-old. I start to clean up the toys but get distracted by a thought that I must write down before it is swept away like a message written in the sand.

7:48 "I WANT MY MILK." I hand the BPA-free sippy cup to the 2-year-old. He hands it back and says, "BACK IN THE FRIDGE." I put the milk back in the fridge. 2-year-old runs to the baby gate by the staircase. I hear him tap it, then he runs back toward the kitchen yelling, "I WANT MY MILK I WANT MY MILK I WANT MY MILK." I retrieve the milk and hand it to him. This is a bizarre routine he has constructed around the consumption of evening milk, and I simply go along with it. What else can I do?

8:15 Take 2-year-old upstairs to brush teeth. He is distracted by a Nyquil dose cup that he repeatedly fills with water and empties into the sink. We pee on our respective potties, looking into each other's eyes. A unique intimacy.

8:23 Husband tells bedtime stories. I place iPhone in the cabinet above the kitchen sink and listen to a podcast while doing dishes.

8:31 Open laptop and stare at Word document of a talk I have to give at a conference in one week. It stares back. It seems both impossible and inevitable that I will get it done.

8:46 Husband comes downstairs. "He's out." We talk on the couch for several minutes, recounting the day, determining how to proceed with the night.

9:16 Floss snaps in half. "Oh, for crying out loud."

9:23 Husband and I watch an episode of "Twilight Zone" in bed, Rod Serling's familiar voice like a bedtime story for our marriage. I think about how all the actors are long-dead and wonder what old TV shows my child will watch in 35 years, thinking about mortality.

9:55 Read 7 pages of Elif Batuman's, "The Idiot."

10:07 2-year-old's sound machine lulls the dark house into sleep.

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5:30 a.m.: Wake up next to baby (23 months old). Sneak out. Put kettle on, put in contacts, take 12.5mg Lexapro.

5:35 a.m.: Son crying. Go back in and try to put him back to sleep.

5:40 a.m.: Ask husband to switch beds and put son back to sleep so I can work. Make tea.

5:45 a.m.: Start work on final draft of column for "Dear Jenny," my pregnancy and parenting column (due today). Drink 2 cups tea.

6:55 a.m.: Finish draft. Greet husband's 24-year-old cousin who lives with us on her way to bathroom. Make toast. Realize I'm wearing my son's mouse ears on head. Research air purifiers on Amazon. Plug in stepdaughter's tablet.

7:35 a.m.: Brush teeth. Deodorant. Send final email to editor.

7:40 a.m.: Wake up baby. Cuddle him for a few minutes until he's not upset. Diaper, clothes, shoes, teeth, milk in bag for daycare. Lunch for me: leftovers from last night.

8:10 a.m.: Walk son up hill to car.

8:15 a.m.: Daycare drop-off. Son is clingy this morning, which is unusual, so carry him up the stairs. Daycare playing upbeat morning music, kids on rug with colors in English and Spanish, Chihuahua puppy named Cookie running about, one of the kids comes up to show me his play guitar. All smiles. So grateful for this daycare.

9:02 a.m.: Arrive at work. Greet boss. Nervous because I just learned a junior co-worker is sitting in on my performance review in three days and I've been wondering if she's going to be promoted to manage me. Also I'm asking for a massive raise.

9–10 a.m.: Start copyedit of 60K-word, 120-chart report.

10–11 a.m.: Meeting. My busiest month in five years here and everyone else is slammed, too. VP of comms.

just got back from vacation and is getting updated. I talk a lot in meeting and VP makes a lot of eye contact. Hope this bodes well for raise request.

11:20 a.m.: Meet husband and 9-year-old stepdaughter outside building. Husband has to go to courthouse to check if stepdaughter's mother's appeal paperwork is in (last year mother accused husband of rape, killing someone, threatening her with guns, domestic violence, etc., in a play for legal custody). Motion denied and more legal custody awarded to my husband. Mother appealing all. They are dressed for waterpark later today. Stepdaughter excited to be at my work for first time and chatters all the way to office. Introduce her to three co-workers and install her on her tablet next to me at a table, where we make faces at each other.

11:59 a.m.: Text husband—news?

12:03 p.m.: Husband calls—no news. And he has to make a client call so will park across from my work until that's done.

12:47 p.m.: Walk stepdaughter downstairs. Run into friend I haven't seen in years, who reveals she's on her way up to interview for a position at my organization. I have mixed feelings about her but after kissing husband and step-daughter goodbye I walk friend upstairs and give her the lowdown on the position and the work culture and offer to put in a good word for her.

1 p.m.: Heat up last night's dinner, husband's specialty: rice and beans. Continue work on report.

1:10 p.m.: Recommend friend to co-worker, who's interviewing her today and has a massive bruise on her face from dental work.

1:45 p.m.: Put on headphones and leave building for 25-min. walk along Mission Canal. Don't have time for 45-minute walk today. Listen to "Breathe" by T  l  popmusik three times and "Upside Down" by Jack Johnson one time.

3:06 p.m.: Slammed. Ask boss if I can contract out a small assignment.

3:19 p.m.: She approves.

3:58 p.m.: Friend says goodbye. Completely zonked and I have 10 more pages to reach daily deadline on project and have to leave in 30 mins to pick up son. And I forgot to go grocery shopping FUCK.

3:59 p.m.: Pack up and leave. Text husband to remind him to do his half of grocery shopping.

4-4:19 p.m.: Trader Joe's run done. BOOM.

4:53 p.m.: My son. Best part of my day. Daycare says he loved being outside today and went up and down the slide 20 times. Correctly identifies a triangle as soon as we get in the car.

4:53-7:30 p.m.: Unload box of toys on living room floor and play. Cash register. Barbies. Elsa. Baby doll. He demands I play "bobby" (Barbies) and that I brush her hair. Draws at kitchen table. Snack: multigrain crackers and a leftover crepe that was on the table. ("I bite it.") Dinner: halloumi and salad and wine spritzer for me, leftover salmon and couscous and chard and watermelon for him. He uses a proper sentence with someone else's perspective, (not "you" or "I/me") for the first time: "She likes to eat green beans," (about the baby doll). Dinner in two parts because he will not put his butt down so I take food and drink away and he decides to protest by leaving room to feed baby doll. I cannot get him to poop on potty tonight because he's too excited about his special guest (who is "pooping" on the kiddie toilet), the baby doll. Bath, wash hair, brush and floss teeth, lotion (no hydrocortisone cream tonight, eczema not too bad), change diaper, pajamas, three books, sing "Rainbow Connection" twice. In dark think about getting up and finishing 10 pages for work. Son kisses me goodnight on the mouth.

10 p.m.: Wake up. Husband on couch. Lie on top of him and we both recount parts of our days. He did grocery shopping. He agrees to sleep in room with baby so I can get up early again tomorrow. Take out my contacts and get in bed. Get up to tell husband about baby's use of a new perspective and that he didn't poop. Set alarm.

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5:48 AM Wake up to toddler foot on my face.

7:00 AM Alarm rings, snooze. Snooze again.

7:19 AM Toddler crawls over me, hands me my phone and smiles. “Ok, up,” I say. He points to his blankies. We walk to bathroom. He sits on floor with the blankies around him and sings softly.

7:30 AM Get toddler milk. Tell husband about an article I read on the history of French dairies in LA. Enter B’s room. “Wakey wakey!” I say. He turns towards me, I stroke his face and give him a kiss. Back to kitchen. Fill water bottle, remove AAC device from charge and place with snack in backpack.

7:45 AM Prepare B’s toast. We are low on butter; I grab a brick from the freezer and realize that it’s already somewhat soft. Get in argument with husband about properly closing freezer after late night snacks.

7:55 AM Enter bathroom to brush my hair and teeth. B follows to use toilet. Husband follows to help wipe. Toddler follows because FOMO. I turn off the water as it bothers B. B and husband leave, toddler gets up and hits head on sink. I give kisses. Resume teeth brushing.

8:10 AM First warning alarm. Husband has finished dressing the boys and naps on sofa. B admires his reflection in the microwave. I brush toddler’s hair into a

baby bun so that it stays out of his eyes. Apply sunscreen to both boys. Include special requests like tummies.

8:19 AM Second warning alarm. Return to bedroom to dress. B follows me in so he can make faces at himself in mirror. Attempt to put on my shoes while toddler tries to grab them and run off.

8:28 AM Third and final alarm. Exit the building. B watches the gardeners across the street while I buckle toddler in.

8:39 AM Daycare. Toddler and I make vroom sounds as cars go by.

8:45 AM Summer school. I chat with a mom friend, her daughter has been placed in a different program than B so I won’t see them this fall. I will miss them. Though I will fight for inclusion til the end, summer school with only IEP families feels free and comfortable.

8:55 AM In the classroom we wait for 1-1 aide to arrive so that I can leave. I set up the AAC device, B browses animals.

9:02AM The 1-1 aide is late. I feel awkward staying so I say goodbye. I walk slowly to the exit. Check office, I don’t see her. I pretend to check my phone.

9:09 AM 1-1 aide arrives. Two accidents, she says.

9:15 AM As I unlock my front door the phone rings. It’s B’s regional center service coordinator who I

was supposed to call back. We agree to continue authorization for current services, and schedule a meeting.

9:23 AM Put on water for tea. Start to clean. But I really should eat. I have my weekly call with the insurance company in 7 minutes. Scrambled eggs and salsa is quick.

9:38 AM The case manager from the insurance company calls. Health inventory—he's a healthy kid. Emotionally? Does he talk of suicide? I don't think he even knows the concept. I hope he doesn't know the concept. Then again, I know 7 year olds who have tried, it's a valid question. Now to my ongoing request: we've completed the multi-part evaluation and are awaiting authorization. State will require they cover it next year anyway so why not start now? When it makes him so happy that he who cannot talk starts singing, why not?

9:54 AM Clean up my food. Start today's to do lists. Procrastinate and read article on neurodiversity and doublethink leading to activism in the former Soviet Union. If you can't do doublethink, you become a dissident.

10:25 AM Add "shower" to list. Follow up on emails.

10:40 AM Shower!

11:06 AM FedEx knocks. I'm still in my towel but I know what it is and I run. Box is partially open but

contents appear ok. My replacement lens. Lenses get kisses too.

11:10 AM Sort clothes, attempt to put away dishes and pay bills at the same time. Accounting stuff. Discuss billing issues via many text messages. Draft collections letter.

1:00 PM Time to pick up B. Hair is still wet.

1:10 PM Phone says 84°F but car says 97°F. I find shady parking. B's 1-1 aide updates, he just finished OT. We leave hand in hand. As I open the car door a woman looks towards my handicapped placard, and then to me. I meet her eyes with my best don't-fuck-with-me face, then go back to helping my son. Car is down to 91°F degrees.

1:26 PM Drive to speech therapy. B requests, "David Bowie Let's Dance."

1:48 PM Park, stay in car with AC blasting until the waiting room clears out.

1:55 PM Sitting in the waiting room, he sleepily nuzzles my arm. We practice greetings with a friend who is also waiting. The speech language pathologist comes out and they go in.

2:00 PM I have 45 minutes. I walk to the Target across the street and buy socks, sunscreen lip balm, and a cold bottle of watermelon water. Arrive back with 10 minutes

to spare. I soak up the waiting room AC and take a few sips of my drink.

2:45 PM Meet with speech language pathologist, discuss work I can do at home.

2:55 PM Driving, the sun burns me through the windshield.

3:25 PM Pick up toddler who is happy to see us but doesn't want to leave. I let the boys play on the porch for a minute. Toddler doesn't want to be in his carseat, his legs are too long and it's so hot. Only a few more days dude, and I can turn the seat around.

3:35 PM At home, missing my keys that I just had. Boys start ringing doorbell. Empty purse on ground.

Inside, B wants to go swimming but we must wait for husband. Toddler wants baby shark. We watch one round of baby shark, then play with trucks. B plays with iPad in his room. He works so hard all day. It's his time to relax.

4:30 PM B requests smoothies and turkey sandwiches for dinner and I agree because it's too hot to cook.

5:10 PM Clean up dinner remnants floor and spilled smoothie. Boys play in living room.

6:10 PM Husband arrives and takes B out to pool.

6:40 PM Neighbors behind us are having a party. B is going full blast splashing. This sensory input is everything.

7:00 PM Husband takes toddler inside, I stay with B. I lean against the wall, listening to the sounds of splashing and Los Prisoneros.

7:20 PM Inside toddler runs around in his diaper, slipping through my fingers every time I think I've got him. B showers. "Tickle, tickle!" toddler shouts. He lays on his belly, tries to see daddy and brother from under the door.

7:30 PM I start to dress B, toddler asks me to wind up a toy. I do. Again. I get shorts halfway up. Again. Again. I refuse and I pull up B's shorts. Toddler throws toy, shrieks. I sign, "All done." It's 7:35. We are 25 minutes away from bedtime. I need him calm before I can dress him. I turn on the TV. Dog lays on top of me. We all sit still and breathe for a few minutes.

7:40 PM It's time. I start the diaper change. Toddler runs. I get diaper changed and shorts on. No top, I chase him down. B is annoyed by the noise.

7:54 PM We say goodnight to daddy and brother and doggie. Toddler goes down like a dream.

8:00 PM B eats a yogurt for dessert, happy that the noise source is asleep. Husband and I discuss quality of children's poops, vow more flax seed muffins.

8:10 PM I start work at my computer, but no, the agreement was husband could work after toddler went

to bed. I sit with B. He points at the TV. "Use your device," I say. He types his request.

8:35 PM I can barely keep my eyes open. I haven't had dinner. B has a hard time sleeping, he may not go down until 11:30. I have to make it until then. We have a calming routine, but it just puts me to sleep. If only I could blast music. I make a quesadilla.

9:50 PM Find carrots hidden in sofa, remember it's trash day tomorrow. I go outside and flatten boxes in the dark. Rattling shopping carts pass behind me, looking for hidden treasure. My neighbor waters his lawn.

10:51 PM B is wide awake. If I put him in bed like he is now, he will start jumping, instead I turn on a quiet, cerebral show about boring adults.

11:24 PM B dozes on my lap. I transfer him to bed.

11:40 PM Dog out/brush teeth/dog in/finally bed.

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00:04 Watching yet another episode of "Herrens Veje" on Netflix. Although I am exhausted, it is something I like doing at the moment to get my mind cleared before I can attempt to sleep.

01:21 My daughter R wakes up because she is having a nightmare. I turn off Netflix and my husband and

I tell her she can stay with us. We toss and turn and I am thinking about how tired we will be in the morning.

01:47 We are still awake and decide to have a talk instead. I turn on the light and R starts to cry. She says she misses my sister too much and does not know what to do with so much pain. My sister died suddenly and unexpectedly last August. We all cry together until R finally falls asleep. B, my husband is next.

3:06 I decide to get out of bed and go to R's room, both cats follow me. We get in bed and I cry. I miss my sister and I feel physical pain from grief.

3:28 I turn off the light. I have to get some sleep.

5:59 The cats are meowing because they want their breakfast. I get up and feed them and turn on the espresso machine.

6:23 My husband wakes up and joins me in the kitchen with the newspaper. We share a coffee with toast and talk about how tired we feel. I am still sad and stressed as I have two deadlines.

6:59 I wake up R. She has summer camp on the beach and needs to be there by 8. I start to cook oatmeal.

7:14 R wakes up, tired and a bit sad still. We eat breakfast and I start to prepare her lunch as she and B get ready.

7:40 We are all running about and R starts to panic as she thinks she'll be late. I help her put sunscreen all over and help her with her hair.

7:50 B and R are out the door.

7:55 I take a moment to think about our night and I cry a little. Decide I have no time, make another cup of coffee and turn on the computer.

8:55 My cell phone rings. It is my niece letting me know that my father has just been rushed to the hospital because he collapsed at work.

9:32 My step brother finally calls me. He is in the hospital with our father in Mexico City. He explains to me that our father is in a coma and does not know if he'll make it through. He says we should not tell the rest of the family yet as we are all grieving still from the sudden death of my sister 11 months ago.

10:45 I sit down in front of the computer as I have to deadlines to complete! I cannot concentrate. I call B and start to cry. We talk for a while and he convinces me to go out for a walk on the beach.

12:30 I am back from my walk. It is a beautiful overcast day. The cats are napping and the day seems calm. My mind is more still.

13:01 R gets dropped off by her friend's mum. She is exhausted from a day on the beach and starving.

I tell her to shower while I cook lunch and sweep all the sand that slips through her bag as she walks through the apartment.

13:35 We sit to eat lunch together and she tells me it was a tough day at camp as they are getting ready for their final competition which entails running and swimming far out in the ocean. She needs to do well in order to qualify. We talk about the beauty of water. She says when she swims she forgets what she's doing. I find her statement both beautiful and terrifying.

14:15 I do the dishes and use the sound of water to cover up my crying. When I'm done, I tell R I need some uninterrupted time to work. She says she'll paint for a while. We hug and she says she loves me and I say it back as we hug.

16:25 Phone call from Mexico. My father's situation looks grim. He's in septic shock after surgery. I decide to call my brother who lives in Chicago and tell him. Together we decide that it's best to not tell mum or our sisters yet. We have a long conversation about our mixed feelings as we have been estranged from our father. I tell him that I feel scared and I think it's got more to do with the death of our sister than with our father's situation. And I can't stop wondering why this is happening right now. I can hardly function due to the pain from the massive loss we endured last summer. I need to be able to feel myself again and focus and work.

17:30 R says she's hungry. We decide to walk to the café down the street and share a tea and a cookie. I tell myself I need to enjoy and remember this moment. We hold hands and do not say a word.

18:15 I realize I need to think about supper. B gets home and we decide we will cook something simple. We go back and forth with options as there is not much in the fridge. He asks if we should have some wine and I say yes. I suddenly begin to cry. I tell him I want to feel fine but I do not know what to do with all the pain. We decide we are exhausted and order some food.

18:40 I try to work some while the food arrives. I hear B and R in the background laughing and it makes my heart warm. The cats are chasing one another all about me as if they want to remind me to stay present. In an effort to stop them, I knock over my glass of wine onto my notebook. As I watch the wine erase the artist statement and notes I had written, I start to cry and laugh at once. It is a reminder that nothing is permanent.

20:45 We sit to eat supper and I tell myself I need to enjoy this meal with my family. R seems happier and we all feel a bit lighter. We make a toast in honor of my sister and the love we have for each other.

21:30 I tell R it is time to turn off the light and go to sleep so she can rest and have a successful tryout at camp tomorrow. We do our night routine, make wishes and kiss good night.

22:00 Sit at the computer and try to type once again my artist statement. I work on my images some more and make some selections. B gives me a cup of hot tea.

23:00 I am too tired to look at pictures and my eyes seem irritated. Turn off the computer.

23:15 B and I get in bed and the cats follow us. We kiss and tell each other how lucky we are in spite of the misfortunes. I want to watch another episode of "Herrens Veje."

24:00 We can't keep our eyes open. Exhaustion has taken over. Turn off the light.

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about 5 am:

I am half awake, as usual. As anyone who's been tortured by insomnia, I was startled at the beginning of this uninvited habit. And then I just learnt to live with it. To enjoy it. Pictures from our past pop into my mind, prompted by the sight of a most mundane object, a smell, a noise, even the temperature or the rain. Since we were in a constant rush in the last couple of years, I came to acknowledge and welcome these morning hours as the chance to (re)live my experiences, detached from time and space. They also learnt to come to me tiptoe. They connect the pieces of the puzzle of our lives and worlds.

6:30 am:

The alarm on my phone goes off, right when I am about to sink back to sleep. I hear JZ waking up in her room. We greet each other, as usual, through the wall, and then I check on her to see if she is getting ready for school. I tell her that I need a bit more time to pull myself together, so I doze off for a couple of beneficial minutes. Soon we meet downstairs and I pack her homemade lunch. One of my favorite moments of the day: I see it as a ritual to let her go safely. She leaves floating in the cloud of her fresh clothes scent.

10 am:

Though officially on a holiday, I feel a bit anxious about being useless on these transition days before JZ is free, too. A nice e-mail from a graduate student asking for some tutorial help for her thesis keeps me grounded. I accept to be her tutor once a week, online. The platform blocks her microphone, and then I learn that she resides in China. We can see each other, and she can hear me, so we end up with me talking to her and her sending me text messages. She is determined and a bit desperate, I guess; she messages me after the session to keep going this way. I like her bright comments and perseverance, so I shoot her some ideas and texts via e-mail. Also, very intrigued by her thesis. She's got a young, firm and kind face.

1:30 pm:

Start to prepare the lunch/dinner to be ready by the time JZ gets home. Also, checking with JZ's school

on how to get a student pass for museums. Turns out, her school did not know about the student pass opportunity, but now they are looking into it.

1:00 pm:

A very unsettling e-mail arrives. I start trembling by just taking the related papers out and putting together real-life stories. My real life stories. Very shaken by how power can intrude into the lives of humans; I am in the process of recognizing, acknowledging and living with the fact that certain laws are made by the privileged to protect their privileges. And I have to rebuild a new strategy, without getting broken, bitter, frozen by intimidation or choosing to be cunning. This latter, out of naivety, I cannot even pretend.

3:10 pm:

JZ calls me to say that she will spend a couple of hours at her friend's. She is getting around well here, and that is the best news ever.

4:01 pm:

We have new friends now. One of them calls casually. We met in a social media group for single parents, more than half a year ago. Two days later she visited us, and since then we can count on each other. It feels like one of my most reliable adult relationships. She will drop in on us today, just to chat and feel comfy. I have now sufficient energy to wash the dishes and my most elegant clothes (they have been waiting for gentle hand washing for a while).

4:30 pm:

Phases of cooking and washing, while thinking. A new, fusion-identity is what I am working on. Like the senses and emotions-thoughts that come to me at dawn, my identity is going to be a puzzle. Beyond the places visited and the time lived, beyond all my experiences. Growing my own glue which holds it all together.

5:10 pm:

A hungry JZ arrives, full of stories. Have to get her to eat. We compromise over a dried tomato and goat cheese filled tortellini, without my preferred spinach sauce. We slow down as we sit at the table and she tells some of her school-stories. Well curated ones. She has her stuff going on, which, I know, will partly be told only during the weekends, when we cook together. I like her secrets, her own life-territories; isles on which she treads to move forward, toward her adulthood. I like them, and I keep them in my mind for the times when a bigger, longer, more distant, more silent island will come, and she will just take yet another step away. She is giggly today, she had some good encounters, and two tests nailed.

5:40 pm:

Our new friend, OG, arrives. I manage to kick JZ out of the house, before she runs late for her street dance class. OG brings some official papers for me to translate and help her fill in. I already know almost all her data, so it goes like clockwork. Then we sit out in our small

garden, OG hardly holds herself back from weeding it. OG and her son are moving closer to the Capital, and there is a lot of planning to do, also, both of us are mourning already. Hasty story-sharing and some plans for the summer and next summer, with kids, maybe their dog. We need the wilderness and the beach, so we're dreaming of Portugal.

7:00 pm:

With OG, we are heading to the supermarket. By her car, obviously, as I don't have one. JZ arrives right away, but she hates shopping, boring groceries, leaves the noble chore for us.

8:30 pm:

Back from shopping, checking my e-mails with a certain degree of obsession, as I'm waiting for a reply from a postponed application. Nothing. Getting back, also refrain myself from checking the fridge to see whether a considerable amount of ice-cream disappeared or not, this way signaling my complete uselessness in covering a successful message on healthy diet towards the offspring. OK, my bad, I checked the e-mails again. Nothing. Also, overwhelming success on the offspring storyline: she declares she hasn't touched the ice-cream today.

8:43 pm:

My laptop chimes whenever a new e-mail arrives, really, from 7 pm onward, so it was not my obsession, it was

the chiming why I checked. And we were selected! Will read the whole message later on, I saw only the, “Congratulations you are selected,” keywords, and now need to inform the partners. We are four very committed professionals from four different countries, eager to work together. So, soon we’ll get together for an eventful storytelling weekend.

9:20 pm:

JZ goes to bed. We slow down. The evening rituals with toothbrush, making the pale-pink and grey bed in a pale-pink and grey young lady’s kingdom. Make a cocoon around a tired JZ. She giggles. Then I sit next to her and we tell each other the best thing today. She has a maths test to take tomorrow. A couple of days more to go. She cannot wait for the holiday. Silently, I come down to my laptop, and with my project partners, we are sharing some quick thoughts on how to organize our event.

9:59 pm:

I skipped working out today, and had some cigarettes, too. We joined our forces with OG and murdered a cider. Just texted her telling that we got the grant, not a big one, though. She replies that I should get paid from now on. She is very concerned about me taking a U-turn toward a severe teaching career. However, I promised myself that will never lose again the last train on the most concrete-cold airport of the world, with a crying JZ, at midnight, with all our belongings on a

truck, and fiercely robbed by the system and its soldiers. I promised myself that I will never be depending on any structure with my Real Work. Telling stories will always be my thing, regardless. I don’t want to hope. I just want to let my strength get out, and that will do. Good night.

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00:00 Amazon Prime Day begins. I’ve struggled to stay awake to see if they lower the price of a light bar I want to take photos. Still the same price. I can’t buy it.

00:10 I go to bed.

00:35 I check the time. I can’t sleep.

01:59 The heat awakens me. It’s 24°C outside, 28°C inside.

02:10 I check the time.

07:00 I wake up, but stay in bed.

07:20 My older son wakes up and comes to my bed.

07:40 My youngest daughter wakes up and comes to my bed.

08:10 We get out of bed.

08:30 We have breakfast.

08:50 I change my daughter’s diaper and dress her. I give the clothes to my son and he dresses.

09:05 We go to the supermarket. My son takes a small shopping cart. I carry my daughter in a big one. She poops. I take her out of the cart because I have the diapers in the car, and it’s better that she doesn’t sit. I lose sight of her 4 times. We finish making the purchase.

I change my daughter's diaper and set off. My son asks me to put some music on, I put on "Hooked on a Feeling" by Blue Swede, loudly, and we sing it.

11:30 We get home.

11:40 I clean my children's trampoline because it is full of leaves. They jump for 10 minutes.

11:50 My children ride their bikes through the garden.

12:20 I clean up the kitchen and make lunch.

13:30 We eat.

14:00 I put my daughter in the crib. My son goes to the couch and falls asleep.

14:15 I sit in front of the computer. I reply to an email about a job offer I am interested in. I eat two ounces of black chocolate. I surf the net looking for more job offers. I wonder in what else could I work. I remember May Kasahara in the book "The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle" in which she goes to work in a wig factory. I send a WhatsApp to an acquaintance who knows someone in a nearby ecological orchard. I imagine myself working in the orchard.

15:15 I go to the couch and fall asleep lightly.

16:00 My husband comes back from work.

16:05 My daughter wakes up.

16:30 We snack. My son doesn't want to eat anything stale because one of his teeth moves. We eat lots of cherries.

17:00 I prepare a matcha tea.

17:10 We go outside, I drink my tea sitting on the bench.

17:15 My husband goes to the hardware store to buy tools for his woodwork.

18:00 My husband gets home and takes the things out of the car and finishes cutting the dry tree that we cut down three days ago. It occupies the entire front garden.

I sit down to write. The children play.

19:00 I go inside to fold the clothes.

19:30 I begin to make the dinner. My aunt calls on the phone. She tells me that in her neighborhood people thought her husband had died because a man with the same name and age passed away. I prepare rice and adzuki hamburgers. I already had the dough made.

20:37 We have dinner.

21:15 We finish dinner. We go outside to water the plants. We water the fruit trees that we planted one week ago: cherry, peach and nectarine.

21:30 I prepare the quartz I collected yesterday and put them in salt water for 24 hours. I put them on a plastic sheet at the entrance of the house. I want them to receive the light of the full moon during the whole night.

22:00 I put my daughter to sleep. My husband does the same thing with my son.

22:20 I take a shower.

22:40. I go outside. It's a little cold. I go inside to grab a sweatshirt.

22:45 I lie in the hammock and wait for the full moon to rise over my neighbor's roof. I always do that. Every summer I have an identity crisis and think about how I am living my life. I wonder if I have a gift for something or not. I make a few little pieces of paper with some life

options, exactly the same way I did on a full moon night last summer. I don't like what is on the piece of paper I choose; I'll repeat it tomorrow again. Tomorrow there will be a partial eclipse; I think it will probably be a better time to do this. I stay there looking at the trees branches, it seems all magical and majestic to me. I'm at peace, but not completely.

23:50 I go to bed.

00:00 I'm hot. I don't fall asleep.

+

3.30am ~ J stirs, I go to her room and find her asleep in the middle of the floor. She's just upgraded to a "big girl" bed in preparation for the new baby. I lift her back into bed as she says, "Boobie," I let her touch my boobs for a moment before leaving her room. I stumble downstairs for a wee before returning to bed.

6.34am ~ Hear J shouting to me that she needs a wee. Hear partner downstairs chatting to H, a wonderful friend who is staying for a few nights.

7.30am ~ Downstairs, make J cereal, she eats a few spoonfuls before getting down from the table. Chat to H and partner. Try to distract J so that I can get her dressed.

7.50am ~ Wave goodbye to partner and H through the open window as they leave for work. "Have a good day, look after yourself," says J as they leave.

8.14am ~ J shouts to me about wanting sparkly clothes.

8.21am ~ J plays quietly in her room. I feel sad that she keeps talking about hitting people. Organize birthday present for my grandfather with my mum and sister via text, plan to take my mum food shopping in a few hours.

8.25am ~ Sense J needs a poo. Finally get her to go on the potty. Empty potty downstairs. Feel sick.

8.31am ~ Put load of washing on.

8.38am ~ Listen to J shout, "You bum bum," from her room. Wonder to myself where she learnt that from. Feel baby wriggling and feel reassured.

9.00am ~ Pause hoovering our bedroom to make toast. J appears from her room and eats the toast from my plate. Make more toast. Sit on bed.

9.32am ~ Finish hoovering bedroom. Get ready to go food shopping.

9.42am ~ Bump into neighbor C and her son E as we leave. Chat briefly. J and E pick wild strawberries. Gather shopping bags and balance bike for J. Leave.

9.51am ~ Arrive at mums. She makes me a cup of tea. J plays with her toys. We discuss mum's cancer treatment (we found out 3 days previously that she has early breast cancer, her prognosis is good).

10.18am ~ Leave for food shop with mum and J in mum's new car.

11.15am ~ Leave food shop. J is hungry and a little grumpy.

11.43am ~ Arrive home. Unload shopping from car. J plays in sandpit. Put shopping away and gather food for picnic lunch at friends house.

12.29pm ~ See neighbor N as we leave for friend's house. Chat briefly. J eats a pitta bread in the back of the car.

12.35pm ~ Arrive at friend's house.

2.22pm ~ Leave friend's house and drive out of town. J moans about her car seat being uncomfortable. I can see she is tired.

2.40pm ~ J falls asleep. Drive home.

2.50pm ~ Arrive home. Go inside and work on my computer for 15 minutes. Hang clean washing out to dry.

3.10pm ~ Wake J.

3.20pm ~ Make blueberry smoothie for J and neighbors son E.

3.44pm ~ Retrieve J from neighbor's house.

3.45pm ~ J makes it to the toilet just in time.

3.57pm ~ Partner returns home. I feel relieved that he is back.

4.07pm ~ Set up easel for J and E outside.

4.30pm ~ Partner leaves for work meeting.

4.33pm ~ Sit down and eat leftover stuffed pepper from the night before. J paints on the easel outside.

4.50pm ~ J scrapes foot in the garden. She comes inside for a cuddle.

4.55pm ~ J is restless so I set up an outside bath for her in the laundry tub. She moans as I tell her not to fill it with mud.

5.00pm ~ Feel exhausted.

5.06pm ~ Serve food. J collects pajamas from upstairs and gets herself dressed into them (unprompted!). I feel relieved that that means there's one less thing to do later.

5.21pm ~ Finish eating. Tidy table and kitchen whilst J plays with musical instruments.

5.43pm ~ Play with J in the garden.

5.53pm ~ J plays football in the garden with E.

6.08pm ~ H arrives back from work. We watch J and E on the trampoline and talk about her day.

6.20pm ~ Partner returns home.

6.27pm ~ Brush J's teeth.

6.53pm ~ J says goodnight to partner and H. I take her upstairs to bed.

6.54pm ~ Tread on toy train entering J's bedroom.

7.20pm ~ Give up trying to settle J and leave her awake in her room in the hope she will fall asleep without having to touch my boobs. Join partner and H downstairs.

7.30pm ~ J appears downstairs. Take her back to her room. Tuck her into bed. Let her touch my boobs.

7.45pm ~ Leave J's room. She is still awake. Send partner up to try and settle her.

8.03pm ~ J is finally asleep. Partner joins H and I downstairs.

10.34pm ~ Brush teeth. Say goodnight to H. Go to bed.

+

01.09 Wake after hearing a bang. No one else awake—go back to sleep.

02.00 A shouts in sleep—very common.

03.15 A calls for, “Mumma, Momma, bwaa bwaa,” sucking sound, he wants water. Daddy is also in the room. I give him some water.

04.45 S gets up for work.

06.00 A starts moving.

06.35 R comes into my bed and cries uncontrollably for daddy. This is common after a nice weekend together and then daddy has gone to work. I try distracting, tickling, singing, he is not letting up. I take a shower. R calms down.

07.00 R ok, lying about. I get dressed. A still kicking about in his cot happily. Both boys have nasty coughs. I get A dressed and R gets dressed.

07.15 I strip all the beds we all go downstairs, I put breakfast out; cereal. I put the washing on. R wants an egg. I make him egg and toast. He's watching Minecraft. He reads a school book then goes back to Minecraft. A watches Dugee.

07.30 Check emails, messages and respond.

07.45 Make a tea and start making my breakfast.

08.00 Teeth cleaned.

08.15 Shoes on, book bag and water ready.

08.30 Ready for school. Try to remove pushchair from car to walk to school. S has packed car with camping gear for next weekend. I dislodge all tent poles and curse.

They're all in a fandango and really heavy to sort out. Have to remove tent to get pushchair out. Walk to school, nice.

08.50 Arrive at school, say goodbye, walk back up the hill home.

09.10 Back at the car try and rearrange the camping stuff. Finally get tent into roof box, it doesn't close.

I curse. Haul tent down. Stick it back in the shed till Friday. Tell husband I'm weeping! (I'm not, I just don't need this). It is with all good intentions.

10.00 Pack a bag for our morning, nappies, snacks, water, etc.

10.05 Drive to supermarket to return camping pump I have bought in error as it is electric not battery! The picture on the box shows a family camping in the

middle of nowhere, I reckon they don't have electricity nearby. A has a paddy when I don't get a trolley as we are just returning the items. Is hard work. All returned. Back to car.

10.20 Arrive at a playgroup, last one till September.

Little party. Volunteer-led so we all muck in.

11.30 Leave for a farm shop.

12.00 Home, make bed up, put A in white body so I can use him as a model for my work (baby blankets) while he sleeps. A goes to sleep.

12.10 Empty washing machine and reload machine, hang washing.

12.45 Photograph all blankets with A fast asleep.

13.45 Prep slow cooked dinner for tonight. Have much on the go.

14.05 Set up flat lay for work, shoot work downstairs. Not satisfied.

14.45 Wake A (refusing to leave cot). Pack library books.

14.55 School pick up. Drive down as I am going to library.

15.05 Meet R. He's cross, wants to play with a friend. We go to library. He sees a friend there. Sort all book stuff, join Summer Reading Challenge.

16.00 Go to chemist in town, boys are really good.

17.00 Arrive back home, put pasta on.

17.15 Dinner is ready.

17.15 Hang washing. Change A's bum. Ready for dinner. Everyone eats well outside.

18.10 S home early. All head down garden to burn the tree that belongs to the neighbor that has fallen into our garden.

18.45 A stings himself quite spectacularly.

19.00 Back up to the house, bath, sort sting. I plan dates for kids on WhatsApp, messenger. Babysitter calls as I cancelled her at the weekend. S reads to A puts him to bed.

19.30 A asleep. I empty bath. I read, "Danny the Champion" to R. He goes to sleep.

20.15 Research how to improve my photographs, white box on white blind not working. Plan to buy a grey blind tomorrow. Feeling tired.

21.00 Bring washing in.

21.10 S gone to bed.

21.15 More research for work, feeling flat. Load dishwasher, arrange family get together in July. Message friend to meet in summer. Dispose of nappies out of the house. Lock up house. Pick up ALL the stuff waiting to go up the stairs which has been ignored by everyone else. Go upstairs.

21.30 Sort all clothes on bathroom floor. Pick up bathmat. Kiss R. Kiss A. Bed. Netflix.

10.00 Sleep.

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2am My son coughs and says, "Dada," but falls back to sleep.

5am My daughter says she is cold and crawls into bed with us. We tell her it is early and ask her to try and go back to sleep. She does, and so do we.

6:30am My son wakes up. My husband brings him into our bedroom. He walks up to me and puts his hand on my face and says, "Mama." I smile. He does not want to get into bed with us, he wants to go downstairs to play. My daughter says, "There's not enough oxygen in this room. I think we need to go downstairs." My husband takes them downstairs.

7:30am I wake up, pee, make the beds, go downstairs.

8am My son and I eat breakfast together.

8:30am My daughter says to me, "I only had one fight ever with Grampa, and I get along with my family, but you and me fight more often and I stay mad at you for a long time."

8:45am My daughter and I sit on the couch and cuddle and read two books together. Then we play "stylish" and paint each other's nails.

10am I check my email. I get exciting news about a part time job I am hoping to get.

10:15am I talk with my parents about the job. I will need them to watch the kids after school a few days a week if I get this job. They say they will help.

10:30am I join my husband and kids in the hammock. My daughter suggests we "pretend we are a family."

11:15am We all hop in the car. We stop to buy glycerine so we can make giant bubbles when we return to the house.

1pm We eat lunch at a restaurant. The kids color and we all play games while waiting for our food.

2:30pm We return to the house. The kids put on their bathing suits and play in the kiddie pool. My daughter puts a net on her head while my son pulls her around by the handle of the net.

3pm My son strips the ferns of their leaves and drops them in the kiddie pool. He has been asked not to touch the ferns and feels badly for having done so. He cries a little and asks for his "Cuddlebum" (a stuffed cat).

3:30pm My husband and father take the kids to the beach. My mom naps and I take a walk.

5pm I return from the walk and chat with my mom on the porch.

5:30pm My mom and I put dinner together.

6pm My father, husband, and children return from the beach. The kids are exhausted. I put a video on for them to watch while we cook.

7pm We eat dinner: burgers, corn on the cob, spinach salad.

7:30pm I walk into the kitchen. My son is naked, playing with a helium balloon. He is trying to tie the balloon to his penis. He says he thinks it will keep the balloon from flying away.

7:40pm The kids take a quick bath.

8pm I put my son's pajamas on, read him a story, and put him to bed. He falls right to sleep.

8:10pm I teach my daughter to play Mancala. We play two rounds. She picks it up quickly and wins both times.

8:30pm My daughter sits and cuddles with Grama before going to sleep.

8:40pm My husband and I take our daughter to bed. We read her a story, rub her back, and hum to her. She is tired and falls asleep quickly.

9pm I make a smoothie for tomorrow's breakfast.

9:30pm We watch the beginning of a movie, but are too tired to finish it.

10:30pm We all go to bed.

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12.00 Watch the last episode of "Stranger Things" with D. It was so sad we watched an episode of "Modern Family" after. I fall asleep watching.

6.00 My alarm goes off. I go back to sleep. Don't even feel bad about it.

7.30 I wake up. I read the news in bed snuggled with the kids. I think about yoga. I tell myself the story of how I never regret it. I resist. Then I decide to do it. I'm feeling tired.

8.17 I get up. I drink a glass of water with apple cider vinegar. Tell D about this project, on purpose to have it be part of the story. Meta.

I check the weather forecast. It's one of the rare cloudy and rainy days in the summer here, I am excited about the rain.

Valerie the donkey comes by.

The weather is cloudy.

I do half an hour of yoga, outside. It's slow and nurturing. I feel a little more awake.

I say good morning to hubby.

I wish my friend Aurea happy birthday on facebook.

I write back to one of the people I am interviewing this afternoon.

9.05 Make breakfast for W and me. Smoothie bowl for me, cereal for W. J is not up yet and doesn't like to eat when he just woke up, so I let him take his time.

I take my thyroid medication.

Have breakfast with W. He has a loose tooth that hurts. We talk. D helps him and explains how to wiggle the tooth, how to twist it to encourage it to fall out.

10.00 Have a massage. I go to this lady just around the corner from us. She gives really deep massages that my back needs from working in awkward positions, and carrying tension in my shoulders. It's fifty minutes of talking to another adult and being touched with intention.

11.05 Come home. Make coffee. Feed the cats. Do laundry. Have coffee. Play phase 10 with D. I like playing games with the kids, games and walking are my favorite ways to slow down and really get to talk to them. She wins. I usually win. We are both happy.

1.00 Work, email clients and nannies. It's raining and thundering. The air smells like summer rain and I am so happy the plants get watered. I am doing things off my to do list that I don't want to do, but they have to be finished to move to the next. I give myself flowers where the tasks were in my journal.

2.00 I go for a short walk on the treadmill, I need to move a little before back to back podcast interviews. I take a quick rinse.

2.30 Interview K. We have some tech issues and I am tempted to try to reschedule. We manage. She is amazing. I am glad we got to talk today.

While interviewing W has lost his tooth. I go and talk to the boys, check W's tooth. J is playing online with his

friends. W is hanging out. The tooth that was bothering him this morning is out of mind, out of mouth and no longer something he thinks about. I ask to see the gap, he shows me, but he's moved on.

3.50 Back to work, prepare mic and sound for next interview.

4.00 Interview A. I haven't seen her in a long time, it's nice to get to talk and she does a great interview.

5.30 I hang out with D, see what the boys are doing. W has a bit of a tummy ache. During my last interview he had an accident. I'm thankful for S and that we can both take care of the kids when the other one has to work.

6.30 Make dinner. I cook for D and me. I make potatoes, onion, garlic, zucchini and little tomatoes. Simple. S is having pizza D made for lunch. I didn't have lunch today. S cooks for the boys. It's musical chairs for cooking kinda.

We have dinner. We sit and talk about our day. J tells me about a group chat he is not in where some kids are saying mean things about him. We talk about the different platforms they are on. There is another one I need to learn and get on. I make a note of talking to some of the moms to see what is going on.

I try to make some plans for S's birthday this week. We go off on tangents. We decide to go out for dinner, we do not decide where.

8:30 Play card games with the family. W doesn't want to play. He sits on the swing next to us and keeps asking to go in the pool. We finish half the game and then decide it's too cold for S and me, but the kids will go.

9:15 Kids go in the pool, I hang out with them by the pool.

Take a shower with W. It's another place where we talk a lot. I ask him if he wants soap. He doesn't. I don't insist. It's summer holiday.

Get ready for bed. It's colder than usual so we have to wear pajamas tonight. Go to bed on the patio, where we sleep during the summer.

Snuggle W until he falls asleep. I know he's asleep from his breathing that gets deeper. Snuggle him a little longer.

J shouts in delight from the patio upstairs where he sleeps with S when he sees he is sleeping under a full moon. He takes pictures and shares on his IG story. That boy fills me with love.

Watch "Modern Family" with D. I fall asleep watching, as usual.

We sleep under the full moon. It has stopped raining.

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0:00 Still up, researching alternative wart remedies online for my 5 year old.

0:15 Finish reading the last pages of Michelle Obama's book, "Becoming."

0:30 2 year old wakes up, needs a drink of water and I comfort him back to sleep. Fall asleep in his bed.

4:30 Wake up to use the bathroom.

5:15 2 year old wakes up and needs more comfort.

6:15 I wake up due to an anxiety dream about trying to stand in line for an ATM at a busy festival while my 2 year old keeps trying to run away and throwing tantrums.

7:30 Alarm goes off, time to get up, wake up boys, the 5 year old needs a hug.

7:45 Get dressed.

8:00 Make breakfast for myself and the boys (fried egg on toast + fruit tray).

8:15 Eat breakfast. Try to convince the 2 year old to eat breakfast.

8:30 Get 5 year old ready and out the door to kindergarten.

8:45 Still trying to get 2 year old to eat something for breakfast.

8:50 Give up trying to feed the 2 year old. Change poopy diaper, get him dressed.

9:10 Carry bike out of basement (with 2 year old's help) ride 5 minutes to daycare.

9:35 Return home, check on information for kindergarten.

9:45 Punch in to my job as a freelance artist. Work on creating silicone casting molds for a community art project with blind and seeing impaired kids.

10:20 Run upstairs to help a neighbor with an English translation.

12:00 Come back downstairs, mix silicone and pour casting molds.

12:45 Sign into Facebook to organize material transport for a project and to promote a show on the weekend.

13:00 Put a load of laundry in the washing machine.

13:05 Run to the grocery store.

13:20 Prepare and eat lunch.

13:50 Check Facebook for responses, write emails, send an invoice for reimbursement, work on mosaic project in Photoshop.

15:25 Pack snacks for the kids.

15:30 Load 25kg of silicone rubber into my bike trailer and transport it across town.

16:00 Pick up 2 year old from daycare.

16:15 Quick stop at the bakery and butcher shop for pretzels and gelbwurst.

16:30 Pick up 5 year old from kindergarten.

16:35 Short picnic / snack for the kids in the kindergarten parking lot.

16:40 With 5 year old in the bike trailer and 2 year old in the child seat I bike to the woods.

17:00 Arrive at woods, more snack time and the kids play on the playground.

17:20 Walk in the woods.

18:15 Finally get kids loaded back on the bike to travel home.

18:20 We spontaneously run into friends from kindergarten as we bike by the playground and they insist we visit their garden.

18:35 Arrive at friend's garden.

18:45 Find a snail and try to convince 5-year-old to let me apply the snail to his warts.

18:50 Give up trying to convince my 5-year-old to let me put the snail on his warts.

19:00 Tell the kids that we will leave in 5 minutes.

19:15 Finally get kids loaded back up on the bike and start back toward home.

19:17 Call my husband to let him know where we are.

19:35 Stop by kindergarten to pick up 5 year-old's bike.

19: 50 Arrive home.

19:52 The 2-year-old locks me out of the house, thinking it is a fun game. I wait outside until my husband comes downstairs to open the door.

19:55 Carry bike down to basement. Carry bike trailer and son's bike upstairs into our apartment.

20:00 Eat dinner, luckily husband cooked spaghetti and it's ready when we come home.

20:15 Wipe 5 year old's butt after he is done going to the bathroom.

20:18 Finish eating dinner.

20:35 Bath-time and check the kids for ticks.

20:45 Brush teeth and put on pj's.

21:00 Read two bedtime stories.

21:30 Lights out, lay with the boys until they fall asleep.

21:50 Boys are asleep, punch into my art career.

22:00 Check Facebook / promote event on Sunday.

22:10 Take phone call from one of the professors
I teach with.

22:30 Head to the studio to cast some tiles for Tactile
Mosaic Project.

23:00 Watch Conan on YouTube with husband and
eat melon.

23:20 Wash dishes / finish cleaning kitchen.

23:30 2 year old wakes up and is comforted back to sleep.

23:35 Finish cleaning kitchen.

23:45 I head back into the studio to cast more tiles.

+

5:55

I am shocked into waking by loud screams. “Mummy
mummy mummy!!! You want to wake up right now!
Get off the bed! Get off the bed!” From a deep coma-
like dream state I open my eyes. My eyelids are like
thick heavy velvet curtains and my muscles can’t hold
them up properly. Through these half drawn curtains
I see the loveliest most wonderful foot in the world
about to kick me in the face. I tell daughter not to kick
mummy. This unlocks the next level of morning torture,
a crying fit.

7:00

I always knew it would happen one day but when it
finally does I am not prepared for it. Desperate searches

without results, what is she doing with the damn
nail clippers!? “I can’t make the slide work today,”
daughter says while hitting the chair and I suddenly
remember that during our many conversations about
the disappearing nail clippers she once resolutely told
me they were “down the slide.” I lift up the cushion
and there they are, 8 shiny nail clippers. I had to buy
1 a week for 2 months, we now have enough to last a
lifetime. Daughters attempt at driving me to insanity
is completely obsolete. I am nothing but wilderness
dressed up.

9:00

Daughter pokes her finger in my eye. “There is sad,
there, inside the eye!” The toddler poetry floors me but
I’m distracted by the fact that I really need to clip her
nails. Emotions are strangled, I groom my daughter. She
has a poo, obliterated by duties on top of duties.

9:05

Our play date cancels, I will not have conversations with
sane adults today.

We visit sick mother at the hospital. She is demanding a
certain kind of bread. She wants the laundry but cannot
remember that I don’t have it. She is lying to me about
things to cover up the fact that she cannot remember.
She has lied to the doctors and told them I don’t
provide any care and don’t know anything about her
case. She has told everyone I refuse to go to her house
when in fact I can’t get enough babysitting to both visit

her and go to her house. Daughter is not allowed to eat in her house so I can't bring her anymore. I have done 4 years of being my mother's care worker and am the main advocate for her well being. I have dragged her through cancer, pleaded with doctors, managed care and fought for her to be given less medication after several life threatening situations occurred related to drug sensitivity. Her campaign against me is a response to my not coming to visit a few days. It's the kind of response toddlers give. She will be "nicer" again after a few more visits but the damage has been done. I am now seen as a neglectful daughter and the doctors don't take me seriously. A nurse comments that she should go out for a walk. I ask him if there is anyone at the hospital who can take her for walks. He sneers at me that this is usually the family's job. All these people that see us once or twice and then never again. All these judgements. The doctors who take care of her for a week and then are replaced by other doctors. I want to ask him if there is babysitting onsite so I can take my mother for a walk as she beats my mental state into a pulp because I can't do it while also controlling a running toddler and it would probably be damaging to my child to witness what will come out of my mother's mouth as I try to take her for a walk. I say nothing and watch him scurry off to the next patient.

10:45

Music class. I dance the hokey pokey and do baby shark while daughter runs amok. I don't care. This place has

taught me a tidying up song which hypnotizes the child into tidying her room. I am forever in their debt. This is also the closest I get to exercise, ever.

11:45

We go to the grocery shop and daughter sings, "America! America!" in the pram the entire time. How does she know about America? Who taught her this song? Then suddenly she demands oatcakes. I have never bought oatcakes nor mentioned them. Where is all this knowledge coming from?

12:05

We go to the playground, I wonder if my fatigue is a safety hazard. For a moment I am unsure if it is safe for me to be in charge of a small child and consider going home. I eat chocolate to buy myself some wakefulness. Daughter has a blast and then another poo. I use up half a pack of wet wipes and have to bribe her with cake to stand still.

15:20

I do laundry for sick elderly mother. It needs to be ready the next morning to fulfill her neurotic wishes. I do it because fighting the crazy costs a lot more energy than doing an extra load of laundry. Then I do daughter's laundry, then I do sheets and more laundry.

Daughter has a poo. She has a temper tantrum while being changed and I get covered in feces. I try to not care about it. I try to be rational and cold but I DO feel

humiliated and dehumanised. I DO feel like a cheap second rate care worker.

16:05

Daughter and I play and make the contact we both need. We laugh and hug and I feel the love washing over me. This moment. I wonder if our days would have more of them if I didn't have so much to do. A partner and a supportive granny doesn't seem realistic so I wish for a cleaner.

17:00

I make dinner while daughter plays. We eat. I don't care about the mess because quite a bit of food is going in her mouth. The internal tension drops when she eats.

18:00

We sit down together to watch "Peter Rabbit." It's about a duck who bakes oatcakes and then the fox steals them and the rabbits have to save her and then they bake her oatcakes. Oatcakes, oatcakes, oatcakes, got it.

Daughter sits on my lap and I fall asleep twice.

19:00

Bed time. Daughter gives me a break and only asks for 3 cups of water and then falls asleep quickly, possibly because I fall asleep within minutes.

20:10

She wakes up and says: "Mamma, you are my best friend," then falls asleep again and I get up and look at my list.

To Do

Strip stairs

Paint stairs

Paint door again

Paint remaining bedroom wall

Write up my day for Mother's Day project

Build rack for tools above workbench

Build website

Write value proposition

Start funding proposal

20:12

I stop reading the list halfway. I don't have energy. Too much has happened today although technically nothing has happened at all. The lack of value in housework and care work is so deeply entrenched that despite having lived it I still feel I haven't done anything. I feel as though I am constantly walking through the ruins of my own potential. But I keep going. I write a tiny bit. One day my child will go to school and have a life of her own. One day she will leave home and I still want to be a person when that happens. I don't want to be 15 years older standing at the door smelling of dust in a raggedy bathrobe and longing for my child to come back. There must be more than that.

22:50

I want to work but there is nothing left. I watch Katherine Ryan's "Glitter Room" again.

24:00

Lights out.

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0.00 I am at a farewell party of a friend who is leaving for her home country because she cannot get connected here in this city. By chance her home country is also my former home country. I feel very connected and I am sad that she is leaving but I am very grateful that we met and that she is following her path to happiness. 0.20 I cycle home. 0.55 I arrive home. The light in our living room is on. I feel welcomed. I turn off the light, brush my teeth and wash my face, my eyes feel itchy. I wash my eyes with baby shampoo. 1.08 I go to my son's room and put the blankets on him. 1.10 I go to bed. I wake by my partner rolling over and checking his phone, it is 8.20. I feel very lucky that we all could sleep that long today. No real obligations this morning. 10 minutes later my partner says, "Do you hear the music?" I am still feeling sleepy and at first do not hear the music. Then I hear it; it is my son playing with one of his toys. 8.33 I get up and wish my son a good morning. I tell him that I heard his music and that it woke me up. He is very delighted. He repeats that he wanted to wake us up by playing the music. His bed is dry. It is his first night sleeping without diapers during the night. 8.40 He goes to the potty which is standing next to his bed. We put it there the evening before in case he needed it during the

night or in the morning. We empty the potty together in the toilet. My son comments that the wee wee is yellow. We wash the potty and our hands. 8.50 We prepare breakfast. I get the plates, glasses, cutlery and the food. We have breakfast. My son eats cereal with oat milk. We call the cereal "Dinos," he does not want to finish it. I finish it. He eats bread with butter and sausages, then another one and a third one. We wash our hands and clean the table. We get dressed. 9.50 We put our shoes on. The shoes of my son are full of sand from the day before. I empty them in the bin. We leave home to go to my studio. We go by bike. I lift my son into his seat which is on the back of my bike. He has a helmet on. He wants me to slightly loosen the helmet. We pass a block of houses. My son tells me what he sees. "An elephant, a squirrel, a lama, a deer, a cow, a monkey, a lion," he says with a loud voice. These are stone-plates above the entrances of the houses we pass. We wait at a traffic light. A big lorry passes by. "With two containers," my son tells me. We arrive at the bike tunnel. We are the only ones in the elevator. My son enjoys that. He tells me happily, "We are alone." 10.05 We do some groceries. We get bread, rice and maize crackers. At the vegetables I choose a cucumber and a salad. My son stands in front of the tomatoes. He says, "Vine tomatoes, snack tomatoes." A lady tells him that she is impressed that he knows the different names of the tomatoes. He looks unimpressed. I say something in German to him and he replies in Dutch.

The lady tells me in German that she is also bringing her son up bilingual. Her big fear it is that her son will not reply in German but only in Dutch. I tell her that I let go of my fears. I have faith that we will sooner or later speak Dutch and also German. We go on with the shopping. We buy vine tomatoes. Then my son wants to get some cookies for himself. I tell him we are not buying cookies today. He gets a fruit-bar, I tell him to put it back. He gets another fruit-bar, I tell him to put it back. He gets raisins I tell him we have raisins and I want him to put them back. He tells me he wants those raisins. I tell him to put them back. I need to tell him a few more times. We pay and leave the store. At 10.30 we are at my studio. One other studio mate is there. My son and I clean the area in front of the studio window. There are fallen flowers from two hollyhocks. I attach one of the hollyhocks with a string so that it does not lean over so much. We go inside and outside at the back to the garden. "Mama, where are my gloves?" I give him his gloves, I help him to put them on. He has a big smile on his face. I put my gloves on too. I start by taking weeds out of the ground. My son wants to help. He helps. I need to use a spade to get the roots out as well. My son wants one too. "A red one," he tells me. I do have a red spade. I wonder if he has seen it before. We get the spade from inside. When he sees the red spade he smiles. I hand it over to him. He tries to carry it outside. It is a bit heavy. He wants me to carry it. I tell him he can do it by pulling it behind him, it works.

In the garden there are many blackberry thistles. I get them out with the spade. My son also uses the spade. Then he discovers plastic pots of some plants we have. We take the plants out and he plays with the pots. He puts straw into the pots from the path I made in the garden. I keep on taking weeds and thorns out. He plays in the garden. Once in a while he comes closer to me. He sees a strawberry. It is a mock strawberry. I tell him that this one we cannot eat but that I have brought strawberries we can eat. Around 11.00 I get a blanket for him so he can sit on the terrace on the blanket. I prepare the strawberries for him. Then I leave him on the terrace with a plate filled with red strawberries. After some time of silence he asks me, "Mama, what are you doing?" I answer, "I am making the garden more organized." This game repeats a few times. "Mama, I want more strawberries." I clean more strawberries for him. I tell my son that I need to go to the toilet. We walk up the stairs. We have a toilet break, first him, then me. Upstairs on the steps he jumps on me and I carry him down the stairs. We eat more strawberries. A glass of water falls. The blanket gets wet. I fold it over so that he does not sit in it. I get new water. This time I put it a bit further away on the foot of a parasol then I go back to my garden work. My son joins me in the garden he makes "vacation ice cream." He puts all the pots filled with earth in a cardboard box he gets from the kitchen. It is ice cream we can take on vacation. 12.00 Short text message to my partner that we are leaving in 20 minutes.

We walk together to the back of the garden. There are two beehives standing. We hear the bees humming. A bee flies into my hair, I try to get it out, it does not work. The bee stings me. It is an uncomfortable pain. I almost get a bit dizzy from it. I can feel the poison spreading in my neck. I walk away together with my son. I put some vinegar on a sponge and put it on the bite. Then I put some plants in the ground and water them. I also get three redcurrant bushes out. They have not had fruits in a few years and they are now in the way. 13.40 A bit later then planned, we leave the studio. On our way home my son suggests going to a playground to go on the slide. We did that last week after we were at the studio. Today we cycle directly home. My son wants to know where his dad is. He suggests that we pick him up at his studio. I tell him that I think his dad is already at home. He tells me, "I think daddy is not yet home." When we arrive home our car is not yet back. We wait a bit and then my partner arrives. My son runs to his daddy. We go inside and prepare for lunch. 14.10 We have lunch together at home. 14.45 I leave to go to work. I kiss my boys goodbye. 18.30 I finish work. I cycle home. 19.00 I arrive home. I whistle and cross the street to see if my boys hear me. First I see a long arm waving and then the face of my partner. Then at the other window my son's head appears. He is smiling and telling me something I cannot hear. I run up the stairs. I kiss my son. I kiss my partner. My partner prepared dinner. It smells great. We are having rice with veggies and an Indonesian sauce,

fresh cucumber, small tomatoes and peppers. 20.20 We prepare for bed. My son goes to the toilet. We brush his teeth. We undress and put his pajamas on. 20.30 I take my son to bed. We read a story and then we turn the light off. We sing a few songs and do a night poem. Then we wish each other a good night. My son wants me to scratch his back and to stroke his belly. Then we are silent. 21.15 My son sleeps. I leave his sleeping room. 21.15 I work a bit behind my computer checking emails, transferring two bills for materials I bought for the bees. 22.20 My partner and I watch a documentary about trains in Japan. 23.00 Quickly I do some dishes and clean up a bit in the living room and kitchen. 23.20 I brush my teeth and wash my face. 23.28 I check on my son. He sleeps without blankets. I tuck him in again. 23.30 Me and my partner go to bed. We kiss each other good night, we lay close to each other. Our legs are touching. Then I roll over and hold his hand. I hear a mosquito. I do not want to move. I fall asleep quickly.

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Up at 5:30. I don't know why M woke up so early but here we are: blueberries, cereal, toast, pretending to be all kinds of animals for M. Coffee for me. So much coffee. 8:30 Trying to leave but there is a bunny lying in front of the front step and we don't want to disturb it. Off to Montessori late. M is happily off to school for the day. 8:50 I am back at home and I feel like I'm spinning. Too,

too much to do in too little time. I readjust my plan for the day after getting a bit of admin work done.

9:45 Hit the gym! Glorious to walk there and back.

Summer feels so generous. Finish workout. Get more done, more admin, some writing.

11:55 Nice to have lunch with my partner B but I'm mostly doing the NYT crossword.

12:20 Back to more admin work. Ugh. 12 more months as department chair. My art practice is a starved animal.

12:45 Out the door to a school meeting. Speak with colleague about some new unanticipated changes.

1:10 In my office at school, a bunch of emails to deal with the issue my colleague raised. Then on to activity-based accounting chores. I consider making a rope out of paper clips, my hair, the tears of swallows and delayed dreams. The rope will lower me out of the window, and I will escape into the ravine below, hiding myself in wild grape leaves.

3:25 Flying out my office door just enough time to get a special snack before picking up M low sugar vegan rice crispy squares at the health food store.

3:40 M had a great day his teacher told me but they couldn't find his sunscreen so they made sure he stayed in the shade for the two hours they were outside. Seems to have worked fine.

3:55 Back home. M and my partner B go outside to play but they come back inside pretty quickly as M is still engrossed with the "Lego robot party" he and his uncle started making on Sunday. I can hear them playing on

the main floor, I am in the attic in my study. I can finally get around to a bit of drawing. I manage to complete the drawing I was thinking about all day, but as I do I realize it isn't the right image for the cover of the book. This last step in completing the publication is eluding me right now.

4:40 M comes upstairs, gets me to lower my desk and hand the drawing tablet over to him. He draws a green beluga and lots of red worm holes for the book cover! Thanks M!

5:50 Dinner. B cooks most of the time these days, and I really appreciate it.

6:15 Bath time for M who is pretending to be a bunny. He has a scratch on his knee that he won't put in the water. He does a great job of washing his hair.

6:45 Downstairs for snack time. M eats toast and works on his Lego robot dance party. He shows me all their dance moves. I can't believe how tall he is getting.

7:15 B puts M to bed, and I go outside to do some gardening. Everything is getting parched and a bit neglected in the heatwave. I manage to water, trim, weed and feel good about how the plants are doing. Hopefully we have a break in the heat next week and I can do more extensive weeding. My cat is outside with me the whole time, she loves to bask in the heat and lolls about on the patio.

8:00 I should do something like reading but I'm tired from getting up so early. I end up watching part of a movie.

9:30 Out of the blue my friend T texts me pictures of her new cat. I rescued the cat from outside last winter. It

took a while to find a permanent home for him, but I am so thrilled we finally met T and she fell in love with the cat instantly. We have become friends over our love for this wonderful tabby. I miss him, but I'm glad to have my studio back after he commandeered it for six weeks. 10:00 M wakes up, and B takes him back to bed. I hear a strange sound and open the back windows. It is the horrible noise of coyotes hunting, really unsettling and scary. I'm so glad the cat is no longer living outside. No wonder M woke up, what horrible sounds. I hope he won't have nightmares. I wait downstairs, I don't want to risk going up the creaky stairs until he is deeply asleep. I can't unhear the coyote sounds. I am concerned for the bunnies. I reassure myself that some will survive as there are bunnies every year. 10:45 Off to bed. Trying to read a novel but I fell asleep on the page I was reading.

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7 am - Wake up to an alarm I forgot I set. Take temperature. Husband is up and making coffee with daughter. Spend 15 minutes checking email, scrolling through Instagram, and online shopping for a bluetooth speaker.

7:30 am - Come out of bedroom. Daughter runs and hugs me and immediately asks to nurse. I remind her we only nurse once a day now. Make fried eggs for myself. Husband and daughter eating omelette. She

picks thyme leaves from the plant and almost knocks it over.

7:45 am - Load dishwasher, wipe table, and clean daughter by spraying her hands and face over and over with a spray bottle. It's hilarious.

8 am - 45 minute whirlwind of getting self ready, getting clothes on daughter, making sure she goes to the bathroom, getting spare pair of pants and underwear in her backpack, and saying goodbye to husband.

8:45 am - Leave house. Walk to end of block then put daughter in stroller. Turn on podcast —“Conan O'Brien Needs a Friend,” Andy Richter episode—as I walk to Acrosports.

9 am - Shoes off, bathroom break. Daughter refuses to pee AGAIN. She's had a pee accident the last 2 weeks here because she won't stop playing to pee. Jump on trampoline, jump off high mats, crawl through tunnels. Circle time.

9:55 am - Daughter makes it through class without peeing! Victory! And pees in potty before we go.

10:05 am - Head out to meet friend for snack at new Tartine bakery that opened today in the neighborhood. Wait in line as daughter pushes her face against the bakery display case. Most things sold out. Order lemon poppyseed cake, strawberry crumb cake, cappuccino, and loaf of bread. Definitely too many special treats, but

able to talk to my friend basically uninterrupted for an hour, so it is a wild success.

11:15 am - Attempt to wipe up crumbs covering table, floor, and chair before leaving. Say bye to friend and walk to post office to drop off some art print orders from my shop.

11:45 am - Get home. Remember that I have a pile of wet laundry sitting in garage. I accidentally washed a disposable diaper with daughter's clothes and it exploded and I didn't want to deal with it. Clothes are now stinky and still covered in goo. We go into yard, shake off as much of the diaper goo as possible, and I toss them in the dryer.

Noon - Heat up baked oatmeal for daughter's lunch. She barely eats. I do my best not to be concerned. I eat leftover enchiladas. We eat some blackberries. Clean up dishes, put away food, spray daughter with water bottle again. She loves it.

12:40 pm - Potty break before nap. No dice.

12:43 pm - Diaper, jammies, vaseline on hands for lingering dryness following bout with hand foot and mouth. Daughter puts 3 "murphs" into her sleep sack. Read 2 books. Lights off, white noise on. Talk about morning, start our one time of nursing today as I sing a song. Put her in crib and leave the room.

1:00 pm - Sit in silence for 15 minutes so I can be sure she's asleep. Surf on my phone.

1:15 pm - Sneak outside to patio with notebook. Do my time tracking for 168 Hours project.

2:00 pm - My skin is literally burning it is so hot and sunny. I give up and go back inside. She should be up soon anyways. Sneak down the stairs to garage/studio, making a loud creak on each and every step.

2:15 pm - Plug in monitor in studio. She's shockingly still asleep. Sketch a drawing of peas and fresh beans. Listen to Conan O'Brien podcast on noise-cancelling headphones.

2:45 pm - Finish pencil sketch. Check monitor. Still sleeping. Decide to ink in sketch.

3:30 pm - Dear god. She is still sleeping. I am done inking in sketch. This is usually the latest I let her sleep, so stop working on art. Text with husband about massive nap. Check email. Check news. Check orders in my online shop and on Etsy.

3:45 pm - Buy Instant Pot, oven thermometer, and Life Straw on Amazon Prime deals. Look for restaurants to go to with husband when my mom comes to visit next week.

4:15 pm - Spent too long doing that. She is STILL sleeping. Finally enter daughter's bathroom to wake her

and end this mercifully long nap. She is shockingly in a good mood, doesn't cry, and smiles and cuddles when I pick her up. I sit her on the counter while I pour her special vanilla milk (our substitute for nursing while weaning). She reaches into the fruit bowl, picks up a purple tomato and takes a bite. I ask if she thought it was a plum. Yep. Back on the counter it goes.

4:25 pm - Go outside on the patio, cuddle, watch for the white butterfly in our yard, and drink special milk. She wants to read so goes and gets Richard Scarry's "What Do People Do All Day." I skip over the very dated and sexist "What Mommies Do All Day" story on principle, though it is a pretty accurate depiction of my day-to-day.

4:45 pm - I need to go to the store for lettuce for BLTs, and dub the trip a "Mommy and Big Girl Adventure." She's excited about not bringing the stroller so we quickly get dressed, downstairs, and out to the bus stop. Bus to store and back, pointing out the Golden Gate Bridge both ways. She wants to "scoot like a leaf" for the one block walk home. I convince her to jump like a bunny instead, and we get home in a not excruciatingly long time.

5:15 pm - Get a text that husband is on the N Judah coming home. Give daughter a grapefruit bubble water which keeps her occupied at the kitchen table while I bake the bacon and tater tots, slice the tomatoes, and prep ingredients for a two-minute mayonnaise.

Husband walks in just as I start the immersion blender. Success! Pour a tiny glass of rosé for myself in celebration.

5:45 pm - Taste test tomatoes as husband gets out plates and bread is toasting.

6:00 pm - Late dinner tonight, due to thick bacon and late nap. BLTs are messy and delicious. Daughter deconstructs the sandwich but eats most of it and a few black bean noodles that I picked up at the store as a backup food option for her.

6:40 pm - Husband clears table. Daughter wants to make sure that he isn't doing ALL of the bedtime tonight. I explain that he isn't, but that when I come in, we won't be nursing. Just snuggling. The weaning process is hard. I'm ready to be done, but she still talks to my boobs and snuggles, hugs, and squeezes them. It's a hard sell.

6:57 pm - Run bath for mayo-slicked child. Call husband up from the garage to sit with daughter while she takes a bath. Pour another glass of wine and sit in silence while I have some computer time. Look at local mom's group discussion board.

7:20 pm - Play playdough with daughter. Make fake cherry pies and pizzas. Husband starts bedtime and I clean up playdough.

7:41 pm - Hear husband take daughter to kitchen to get water. Hear, "Where mommy go?" as door to living

room pops open and I get clambered on by a very naked, happy kiddo. Snuggle for a minute until husband convinces her to go back to bedroom for books.

7:45 pm - Look at Instagram. See screenshot of a Reddit sub called "Daniel Tiger Conspiracy." Immediately go to it and read about the insane tiger skin curtains the Tiger family has in their living room.

8:05 pm - My daughter and husband call for me from her bedroom. I go in. We say goodnight to everything in the room. Husband gives us hugs and kisses, turns off light and turns on white noise machine. Remind my daughter no nursing tonight. Only snuggles. She snuggles the boobies. We recap the day, talk about what a big girl she is becoming, and talk about what we are going to dream about. She answers, "Mommy, and boobies, and milk in the boobies, and nursing the milk from the boobies." I silently freak out.

8:15 pm - Sing song and cuddle. Leave the room. She settles down and falls asleep 30 minutes later, after loudly singing the alphabet song to herself.

8:30 pm - Watch shows online with husband with ear buds in. Drink another glass of rosé.

9:15 pm - Get into bed. Talk to husband. Remind husband that if daughter asks him what he dreamt about tomorrow morning, his answer is, "Octopus." Read book on Kindle.

10:15 pm(ish) - Sleep.

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12:15 am

My husband J and I are in bed talking about our week. I lie awake for a while hoping we don't have bed bugs.

7:45 am

M wakes up and calls her dad, repeatedly, until he goes to her. M is almost five and still won't get up by herself. I hear them starting the day but sleep a while longer.

8:20 am

Wake up, go to the bathroom, leave phone on bedside table. My period became heavy in the night and I have some blood to clean up. My phone alarm goes off until J comes down the hall to turn it off.

8:30 am

Make toast and eggs, coffee, sit at the dining table. M soon asks me to come sit on the couch with her. She has finished her breakfast and wants to put her feet on me while I drink my coffee. I keep asking for space so that the coffee won't spill but she keeps pushing on me, full of fun. I ask her to get off the couch, she pouts.

9:40 am

I go outside and gather up our swimsuits and towels that have been drying on the fence during the night.

10 am

J starts a weekly video meeting with his work. M sits on the arm of his chair and says hi to everyone on the call, then sits quietly while they discuss work. I putter nearby worrying about her involvement because Monday is technically my day for childcare. I get dressed, then play with M for a while in her room. She leads a game of taking a camping trip, in which we are sisters.

10:45 am

Take M out for errands. First stop is to buy cheese at a Mediterranean grocery. M asks me to tell her the story of "Snow White" while we drive.

11:20 am

Second stop is a French bakery. Summer vacation necessitates a weekly outing, and this is it this week. M and I pick through some pastries and then sit on a cement bench on the sidewalk by the parking lot. I can't find my car keys in any of the bags and try to explain what is going on without alarming her. We agree it is a bad feeling. I go back inside the shop and find the keys sitting by the cash register. We sit outside a little longer until a wasp starts hanging around us. I suggest we go back to the car and start walking there myself, until I hear M crying frantically a few paces behind me. The wasp has been flying near her head but goes away. I kiss her cheeks and help her into the car.

12:05 pm

Third stop is Old Navy, looking for cheap flower-girl shoes. M tries on every pair she can find that say "11" on them, and we finally decide to get gold ballet flats. She addresses the mannequins and hides from me as I herd her toward the checkout line. She asks to buy candy, I say no.

12:26 pm

Get in the car. M says we should go to McDonald's but I say no, we already bought a treat today. My other reason is that I don't want to have to change my menstrual cup in the McDonald's bathroom stall with M. She asks me to tell her the story of Sleeping Beauty, and fills in details when I stop talking so I can focus on traffic.

1 pm

Lunch with the three of us, as usual. We share a pastry with J, who is working on his laptop at the table and is mostly uninvolved in lunch. I make plates of miscellaneous items like hummus and cherries for M and me. I get very sleepy afterward and lay in bed while M watches her afternoon shows. I fall asleep.

3 pm

Wake up from nap. Go to living room, where M is playing and J is working. Everything seems fine. I lay on the couch, where eventually M finds me and incorporates me into her game. She pretends to be my teacher, my mother, my ear surgeon, and then an evil

witch who poisons me. Finally I say I don't want to play any more pretend games. I wash the lunch dishes.

4:30 pm

J starts dinner; M and I play memory cards at the dining table. I feel vaguely irritated that I slept half the afternoon and that M has turned the memory cards into phones that she is selling to me over and over again. I feel like I can't pretend anything else today.

5:45 pm

Dinner. J and I talk about the day while nagging M to eat her veggies and stop eating with her fingers. We sort out plans for the next day. J is going to the dentist, M is not going to grandparents' as planned.

6:15 pm

J and M pretend to be restaurant staff cleaning up the dining room.

6:30 pm

We hang out in the living room. I text a friend back while M climbs all over J. Finally I get her ready for bed, because it's J's turn to put her to bed.

7:30 pm

Bed time. M hides but eventually gets to her room. I do the routine of kisses and hugs, and then go scroll through Instagram on my own bed.

8:15 pm

Change into pajama pants. J is reading to M but says, "Nice patterns," as I walk by, because the blue floral

pajama pants clash with the leopard print t-shirt I've had on all day. I eat a piece of chocolate, drink some almond milk, wash dishes.

8:39 pm

J walks up to me at the sink to show me a free planer he's found on Craigslist. He just said a day ago that he would probably never buy a planer, but this is a free one! He's out the door to see if it's still available.

9:20 pm

Finish doing dishes, get a glass of wine that J had meant for sangria, and sit down at my desk to look through a project I'm feeling stuck on. I look through every page until the end, then look at bugs flying against the window. The house is very quiet.

9:50 pm

Start to type up day.

10:00 pm

J gets home with his free planer. Coming in the door, he spots a possum climbing the tree just outside the window; I see its white silhouette for a second. We unload the planer from the car with some difficulty and scoot it into the shed. I tell him to take a picture.

10:15 pm

Back inside, back to typing.

11:09 pm

Am getting a headache and go to the kitchen for an Ibuprofen.

A cockroach is between me and the pantry door and I swat at it but it escapes under the fridge.

11:11 pm

I sit next to J in bed, each of us on our own laptop. He is watching number 4 of 9 YouTube videos of a guy disassembling and assembling the planer he just picked up. I poke around the internet, check emails, and invite our family to M's 5th birthday party, the details of which we plan as I type. J shows me an Amazon gift list.

11:43 pm

I go to the bathroom, brush my teeth, wash my face, put on a pajama shirt. I get back in bed and J shows me an oddity on YouTube before taking his turn in the bathroom.

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12–2:30: Wake several times with back pain.

2:30: Daughter cries. I wake my partner to bring her to the big bed. She cries, "I want seahorse." She is angry.

2:31: I realize I need a wee and get up too.

2:33–7:30: I take a long time to go back to sleep. I wake periodically due to back pain. I have vivid dreams including one where my bump is see through and I can see my baby inside. Doze and wait for daughter and partner to wake so I can stretch out. He is off work today and we have planned to stay at home.

7:30: Daughter wakes. Is delighted that it is morning. Wakes her dad by singing the wake up song. She sings, "Wake up, Daddy, wake up, Daddy," to the tune of "Frère Jacques." He suggests I get up instead and I say I need time to stretch out my back in bed alone.

8:10: They get up. I feel guilty and lazy. Read book in bed for a while. Get hungry.

8:50: I get up to join family downstairs. I eat breakfast while daughter and partner play Lego. I worry about back pain.

9:30: I study for my driving theory test while daughter pretends she is a lamb and climbs over the furniture. I try to entertain her by reading my study material out loud but understandably she gets bored and wants more quality attention.

10: Have a cup of tea. I study more while daughter and partner watch "Sarah and Duck."

10:30: I cut my daughter's toenails. I get a shower. Partner gets daughter ready. Daughter and I pretend to be Doctor Hamster the vet and Raphael from the Turtles while I get dressed and partner showers.

12: I start repairing wallpaper in bedroom while partner cleans out the car. Daughter plays between the two of us, helping. I worry about how much we need to do before we move house and how I am going to manage sore and pregnant.

1: We have sausage rolls and salad for lunch. I cry and am not sure why. Daughter comes to hold my hand.

2: Daughter decides she wants to have a nap on the sofa bed in the living room. We make a nest with pillows and blankets. I read her a story and she tells us she wants to get up and eat jelly.

2:40: We abandon the nap and eat jelly and ice cream and watch “Booba” on Netflix.

3:50: We have a big family hug. Daughter and partner go out. I tidy up and do some packing while listening to a podcast about pain science.

4:30: They come home. I help my daughter find some buttons to make a kindness jar. She chooses big red ones. I resume packing. While packing books I find a sealed envelope with my partner’s name on the front and a kiss on the back. Presumably from me in the past.

I take it to my partner and he reads it aloud. It is a letter I wrote to him at Christmas in 2012. We had been together for a year and a half and were preparing to go traveling around Australia together. It is lovely and I cry. We don’t remember why it hadn’t been opened until now or where it has been all this time.

5: I resume packing and they keep working on the kindness jar. I consider suggesting we go for some driving practice but am unsure about driving with my daughter in the car.

Realize my new green dungarees have dyed all the washing. Feel sad. I hang them up outside and stand for a moment smelling some lavender.

6: Tidy up wallpapering and packing stuff. Hoover. Cuddle with my daughter on the sofa and watch some Cbeebies. Do some work on my phone.

We eat dinner together then I finish off my work while partner gets daughter ready for bed. I text my dad to ask if he can help me with driving practice tomorrow. Then worry I am asking my parents for too much help at the minute.

8: I lie with my daughter in her bed and read stories. She laughs at my silly voices. The baby kicks a lot while we read and daughter pats my tummy and talks to the baby. We lie down and chat and I sing “Silent Night” as she falls asleep. I have to concentrate to stay awake. I lie beside daughter and feel the baby moving.

9: I get up and leave daughter to sleep. I check my phone. My dad has replied and seems enthusiastic about helping tomorrow. I am relieved.

I go downstairs to see my partner. He is watching “Suits.” We sit for a while with his hand on the bump but he can’t feel the baby kick.

9:50: I go upstairs to brush my teeth and read in bed.

10:30: Put on hypnobirthing relaxation track and go to sleep until my daughter wakes again.

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6:10am Today started like any other Monday except the cat woke me up by knocking my water glass off the bedside table and I had to get up and clean up the water from the floor. The house is oddly quiet. My only daughter B is not home. She would normally be awake, and I would hear her radio playing some pop tunes down the hall behind her closed bedroom door. B is with her father, my ex-husband, adventuring in Australia for a month. It is strange having time to myself for creativity and reflection. My life has been go... go... go... since the day she was born. Finding time to be a mother, a full-time analyst and to make time for my creativity has been challenging at best and yet the space that my daughter's summer absence has provided me feels oddly empty and unfulfilling.

6:20 Locate laptop and sit up in bed. Log into work email to find our overseas developers have sent 10 urgent messages for us to resolve this morning. Slam laptop shut and reach for my iPhone. Balancing work with looking at my IG feed to see what others are doing today. My cat decides to join me on the bed and is making it difficult for me to want to leave.

6:45 Shower, wash, dry and style hair, pick out outfit and get dressed. Put on minimal make up.

7:25 Head downstairs to the kitchen to feed the cat. Make a cappuccino and toast to quickly eat so my

stomach isn't empty. Unload the clean dishes out of the dishwasher and put away. Note that some of the plates have cheese stuck to them. Mental note to replace my 17 year old dishwasher in the near future.

7:45 Thinking about my work as I drink my coffee sitting on the front patio. The sun is out and it's going to be a beautiful day. The cat follows me outside and seems pleased that I am on the patio with him. He weaves his way between my legs and hops onto my lap looking for affection and reassurance. I oblige. Looking out at the neighborhood I am wishing I did not have to work today. Everybody else seems to be on holiday. Since my husband cheated and left us I have to focus hard on the career that supports myself, my daughter and my creativity.

7:50 Put my dirty dishes into the dishwasher, gather up my purse, sunglasses, keys and laptop and head out the door. Get into my SUV and brace myself for the reverse commute out to the far-flung suburbs where my head office is. My work day is peppered with the usual problem solving and system integration puzzles, missed requirements, additional requirements and stakeholder management that usually occurs. Try to solve the issues in my brain that were sent via email this morning from Portugal development team.

8:45 Arrive at the office. Set up my laptop and log in to see what emails I have missed since 6:30 am. Work

on projects and attend 3 meetings and one SKYPE call before lunch.

12:10pm I'm hungry again so I head downstairs to a cafeteria and pick out a spinach salad to go. I decide to take off my blazer and eat lunch in the park across the street. Lunchtime affords me the luxury of people watching and that is what I do. I spy a woman walking down the street wearing a long gown, gloves and carrying a covered birdcage. I MUST capture this and I am regretting not having my Olympus with me. I capture her beauty and grace on my iPhone.

1:10 Back to the office, and I head back to my desk and into conference rooms, diving back into projects that will take me past 5pm. Without my child at home, I do not have a set time to be back for dinner, which is a strange feeling.

5:15 I head downstairs to the parking garage and drive home in traffic that is worse than my commute in. I often wonder why we all start at different times of the day but everybody seems to be in a hurry to get home at the same time.

5:50 Arrive home and my cat runs to the door to greet me, which means he's bored / hungry. I slip off my sunglasses and shoes, put down my laptop and purse and feed him which seems to make him happy.

6:00 I head upstairs to remove my work clothing and jump into a cool shower to remove the day.

6:20 I wander back downstairs and open the fridge... staring into it I have no idea what to make myself for dinner. It's so odd to not have another person to cook for. I quickly decide on a bagged Cesar salad kit and take that out and make that.

6:40 Sitting down on the sofa with my big bowl of salad and my smartphone I review the photos I captured that day and post a few to my photography account.

7:00 My mother calls. She is panicked again because I have not called her for a whole day—I reassure her I'm fine and keeping busy.

7:12 I check my email for the fifth time today—no email from my daughter. I haven't heard from her in a week and today she is supposed to be in Brisbane. I fire off an email to her father asking him to give her a nudge to send me a message. I just want to know that she is safe, happy, and having fun. I feel empty without her in the house and I realize that this is the first time since I was 27 (I am 49) that I have lived on my own with no responsibility other than the cat and myself. This should be liberation but it is oddly lonely.

8:00 I decide to use my time wisely and curate some photos to submit to be juried for an upcoming exhibit in Vancouver.

9:15–11 Mindless TV. At some point I opened up and ate 3/4 of a bag of cheese popcorn. The dinner salad wasn't enough. I start to cry around 10:30pm. I feel

empty, alone, and missing having a male companion. I'm not dating anybody and have been single now for 11 months. I haven't met anybody and I am afraid of online dating as I had a bad experience with a man who pretended he was single but was actually married, and another who said he really liked me but then disappeared. I wonder if I am too old, too fat, and destined to be alone. I was married for nearly 20 years—maybe that is all I get? I know I must be tired and I know being with a person doesn't define me, but I do sometimes wish somebody showed some interest in getting to know me. Maybe this house being empty is what my life will be like in a few more years when my daughter decides to move out to go to school. I must get used to it.

11:10 Brush teeth, wash face and put on pj's. Slip into bed and the cat comes to join me. Activate my echo dot—"Play question of the day"—and I get the answer correctly. Ask Alexa to open and play TED talks on space travel. Fall asleep listening to a talk on rocket propulsion.

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6:23 am Husband leaves for work, lay in bed watching cat clean himself and review plans for the day.

6:32 am Get out of bed, say good morning to teen, make coffee, forget it's just me and make a whole pot.

Make eggs and toast for teen, notice we are low on ghee, bread, cream.

6:43 am Put away last night's dishes that are in drying rack, wash a few cups and pan from eggs.

6:45 am Teen tosses toast in compost, says it tastes moldy, egg follows shortly after, teen makes himself muesli with almond milk, we are out of almond milk now. Put away muesli, take coffee outside, pick up socks left on deck, not enough cream in coffee, notice wispy clouds, hear woodpecker and chickadee calls, traffic, and a wasp stripping bits of wood off the deck rail.

7:00 am Take coffee downstairs to studio, meditate, do physio exercises, put on music and glasses and sit down to hemstitching an in-progress piece on the loom.

7:40 am Turn off music, go upstairs and notice cat staring at dishwasher intently and wonder if we have a mouse in the house. Notice the kettle is on, teen is making instant oatmeal for himself and his brother. Throw out empty oatmeal packets, say good morning to pre-teen, have a shower and get dressed. Notice I'm out of deodorant.

7:55 am Make breakfast for myself, muesli with quarter of an orange and last tablespoon of yogurt, make grocery list while eating, cut up remaining orange for teen's lunch, brush and floss teeth, add toothpaste to grocery list.

8:15 am Review shape of the day with the boys, put out money for remainder of teen's lunch, pack myself a bag, search for glasses case, tidy kitchen, remind teen to review for summer school math test, take out compost, forget grocery bags, get a hug from pre-teen when I come back for them, drive to orthodontist.

8:48 am Park car, notice ankle pain and regret leaving ankle support at home, assistant takes the wires off my braces.

9:00 am Drive to dentist, park car, check email, cleaning + check up, new hygienist gets my teeth really clean, make an appointment for next week to get a chip repaired.

10:38 am Drive to orthodontist, check in on boys from the car, everyone is good.

11:45 am Wires put back on and adjusted, discuss schedule for putting bottom braces on, some confusion at front desk resolved quickly and next appointments scheduled, drive to grocery store.

12:15 pm Drive home with groceries, drink smoothie bought at store in car for lunch on the way home. Feed pre-teen a pre-made rice bowl for lunch, put away dishes left out by teen, sweep floor, finish drinking smoothie after cutting off the soggy top on the paper straw, get pre-teen organized for his summer school, put kettle on for tea, look for pen and decide it was left at orthodontist, reply to emails, make tea.

1:00 pm Brush teeth, drive pre-teen to summer school, notice two rats escaping a crow, a deflated one-was-yellow soccer ball in the alley and a scowling man gardening with a machete.

1:20 pm Drive home, husband is home with four flats of blueberries from a farm in the valley, discuss re-scheduling teen's guitar lessons and the neighbor's composting habits while he eats left over rice bowl and cold coffee, neighbor is cleaning carpets with industrial cleaner that is very loud and smells like oranges, the sound and smell are distracting.

1:43 pm Husband goes back to work, I head back to studio with tea, weave 20" and hemstitch one row and read an article on weaving history.

3:00 pm Drive to pick up pre-teen.

3:20 pm See Ms. W from our local school, chat about the efficacy of summer school or lack of, a young boy with a big grin stands in front of me with hands on hips and declares, "I know you," he recognizes me from an artist residency at his school last year, on the drive home the pre-teen and I discuss different types of rice, we determine which ones work best with chopsticks and the subtle flavor differences, we decide Japanese sushi rice is the best.

3:40 pm Give pre-teen five dollars and he walks to the store for ice cream, I nap.

4:20 pm Pre-teen comes back and tells me all about the injustice of ice cream pricing, I get up from nap, eat a couple of spoons of Reese ice cream while making dinner, teen comes home excited about doing well on his test, husband calls to tell me he has to travel for work this Saturday, we discuss guitar lesson re-scheduling again and how we will navigate my teaching schedule, I search the internet for books to use a coupon I got at the grocery store earlier, order a Japanese sewing book.

5:20 pm Struggle through soft tacos with sore teeth, teen is happy that I found tomato free salsa at the grocery store, he is allergic to tomatoes, brush teeth.

6:00 pm Remind teen that he has karate tonight, pre-teen and I walk to swimming pool, talk about blueberry seasons past and present, plant varieties in Minecraft, different ways to mix colors to make brown and natural dye plants.

6:20 pm Catch up on email, social media, knitting while pre-teen swims with friends.

7:45 pm Walk home from swimming with pre-teen, discuss different house styles and preferred materials, agree that moss is brilliant, watch a family roast marshmallows over an open fire in their front yard, pick a few sour blackberries in the alley near my dentist who lives around the corner.

8:15 pm Come home just as husband and teen are leaving for karate, make tea and snacks, change into pajamas, pre-teen reads novel while eating PB+J, I do research online and eat vegan chocolate pudding, we both eat cherries, brush teeth.

8:45 pm Settle pre-teen in bed with a book, I go to bed with a TED talk on my laptop and do more online research that becomes less and less relevant, switch to a body scan meditation, hear cat trying to get out, pause meditation, put cat downstairs, close back door and go back to meditation.

9:49 pm Lights out and asleep before husband and teen are home from karate.

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3am Wake up at the hotel in Krakow in Poland.
Dream about K and S.

4am Send a message to husband in Japan:
“Don’t forget to take T. to Kindergarten!”

6am Think about K and S.

7am Eat breakfast at a stylish cafe for 30min.
Feel no rush.

10am Take a bus to Stary Sącz.

2pm Meet members of Artists in Residence.

3pm Eat lunch.

No time to talk with K and S on FaceTime.
(So they cry, I know that after.)

4pm Walk and look around main square.

6pm Eat dinner with members.

8pm Go to bed.

Very tired because of jet lag.

Regret coming to Poland a little bit,
because I'm a mother of K and S.

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7:32 Husband bathes 2-year-old. I start to clean up the toys but get distracted by a thought that I must write down before it is swept away like a message written in the sand.