

Summer Picnics

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We picked out decorations,
mother and baby ducks
adorning the yellow nursery.

When you came home, you
latched onto my breast,
burped, slept, pooped, cried.
Gave home a new meaning.

You learned to say “mama”
first, and I cried. When you
learned to walk, we took you
to Boston Commons to bask
in the branching, green hours.

Ducks quacking to life before
your eyes, wide as buttons on
your green coat, matching hat.
Here, five years ago, we fell
in love. Pronouns widening,
loving you deeper by the day.

In August, we worried and
memorized developmental
milestones. In those frayed
moments, there was no fair
way to distribute pain, ease
guilt, unravel complex
diagnostic labels.

The first year of Rett’s,
we gained a label only to
worry more about
loss of talking, walking,
growing, and even breathing.
Silence replacing speech,
sirens replaced counting sheep,
seizures replaced sleep.

We memorized your
favorite stuffed animals,
movies you loved, and
stories reminding you that
you were safe.
Your resilience made us
proud, progress made us
hope, and time made us
stronger together.

We count things in
moments, remember
certainties. Like how
we still go to the pond,
the ripples of water,
not unlike your waves
into our lives. Together,
we throw bread at ducks.
Relish our time in the
soft, turning hours.

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