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.
## Summer Picnics
Ellen Zhang

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