

I see

The agents. The phone calls. The handshakes. The smiles. The pictures. The floor plan. The nodding. The lies. The zeroes. The worry. The wonder. The questions. The day.

Out of the corner of my eye, I see my eldest son pushing a small red car, his voice going up and down as if controlling the traffic on this small strangely laid out road in the living room. The car drives smoothly, then - without warning - revs up and comes dangerously close to the other cars, whose drivers seem to have left. The red racecar, now aware of the risk, slows down, and my son cries out in victory, having skillfully avoided a multiple-vehicle collision. The red car continues its journey, but I don't know where.

I see my husband measuring the flour, the water, the salt, the yeast. Staring at the scales and pouring a couple more grams, then a few more. There. He's satisfied. He's now sprinkling the kitchen countertop with bread flour, and takes a deep breath before rolling back and forth tomorrow's breakfast bread. Some flour is now on the ground, but nobody can see it, and no one will dust it.

I see my youngest son scanning the room for an object, any object, that could be hit by his foot. Nothing too heavy, nothing too light. Without a football in sight, he will settle for a small teddy bear or a paper cup. Or even a plastic bottle top. Or one of my pens. At this stage, he cannot be too picky. There is not much to choose from, so he settles on one of the foam stacking blocks. He tests it, tries to lift it with his left foot, then kicks it towards the wall. "Yes!" he screams, to the top of his lungs. "Yes! Score!" and he looks at me for a high-five. Now he is running in the communal garden, bouncing a basketball, a slam dunk between his eyes. "Yes!" he cries again, and his smile stretches far and wide.

I see myself sitting at the balcony table, looking at the passers-by, jotting down ideas, thoughts, memories, and piecing them together as one story I will later on type on my computer. I wonder if it will ever be read, by me, by others, but first, will it be written?

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I see it all in a second or two, as I walk from one room to the other, as my mind erases this unfamiliar furniture and replaces it with ours, as it places every member of the family in one

room or another, as I try to add up numbers in a rush, to figure out if this can be a dream or an illusion, if we could ever live here, if we could call this place home.

I see more

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A noise then distracts him, he runs to the window, steps on a pocket-size minivan, and falls to the ground. He is wincing and crying; I can't see his face, but I fear this will not be the last bump.

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The yeast. He has forgotten the yeast. He swears. He swears he has put it in. He retraces his steps. No, he didn't. He backtracks again. He did. He remembers. Or maybe he doesn't. He swears. And starts again.

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Another child comes from around the corner. Out of thin air, we had not heard him yet. He snatches the ball, and scores. Scores again. My son is confused. Who is this new player?

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The answers. The greed. The starting again.

Notes:

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We had been house-hunting for months to no avail, when my husband mentioned he would like to view an apartment not far from ours. I looked at the pictures, and thought ‘meh’. Maybe I even said it out loud. I definitely did. And moaned all the way there, that I thought this was a waste of my Saturday, when I could be emailing literary agents instead. We got there, and my mood was not great, as I thought of this as yet another twenty minutes I would waste, already regretting the decision to come here, when we had already spent four months looking at apartments that were simply uninspiring.

This short piece came to me as an afterthought. We visited the apartment and really loved it so much we would like to buy it, and after coming back home I realized I spent my time there not so much looking at the actual place but imagining us living there. I could almost feel us physically there, as if we had already bought the place.

I see more

Two or three weeks later, after thinking about my own thoughts, and loving this place so much, fear took over. What if lots of things were wrong with this place? Eventually we made an offer, and somebody else did, the same day. The house had been on the market for ten weeks and nobody had been interested yet. But the day we made an offer, somebody else did. And they got the place. Goodbye dream house. Some of the things that go wrong in the story are meant to reflect the things that went wrong for us during this process.

Fast forward four months: we found an amazing place that exceeded our expectations. I haven't written a third story though.