

Fruit of the Earth, by Lori Strauss

INT. NURSERY - NIGHT

JOEL dressed in boxers and a t-shirt leans over a crib. AIDAN sleeps.

JOEL  
Aidan. Aidan, Aidan.

JILL (O.S.)  
I can hear you from in here, let  
him sleep for chrissake!"

JOEL  
Shh, you're interrupting my time  
with him.

Aidan sighs in his crib and Joel smiles.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
You, my best boy, will inherit the  
earth.

JILL (O.S.)  
Come back to bed, leave him be.

Joel puts a gentle hand on Aidan's belly, just enough to  
cause him to stir.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joel enters a darkened bedroom, we can barely make out the  
bed and can't see JILL at all.

JOEL  
He's a really good baby.

JILL  
He is, now hush, I'm going back to  
sleep.

JOEL  
I made the perfect one.

JILL  
Mmhmm.

MONTAGE. Joel admires Aidan, Joel smiles and returns to bed.  
Repeat. A clock rapidly advances. Three years elapse.

INT. NURSERY - PRE-DAWN - THREE YEARS LATER

Joel in boxers enters Aidan's room. The crib has been replaced by a "big boy" bed.

JOEL  
Aidan. Aidan, Aidan.

Aidan rolls over, groggy.

JILL (O.S.)  
Time to get up!

AIDAN  
I'd rather sleep.

JOEL  
Your speech has improved so much!

AIDAN  
I suppose it has.

JOEL  
Come on, I want to show you something.

Aidan stumbles out of bed, still very much a bow-legged three year old.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
Your coordination is lagging behind your speech.

AIDAN  
What do you want me to do about it?

JOEL  
Yikes! Don't grump at me, kid. I assure you that this all has a purpose.

INT. HALLWAY WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Joel picks up Aidan to give him a view of the stars out the window.

JOEL  
Here is Ursa Major, which you already know, but if you trace your way up from this corner star here, you'll land at Polaris, the North Star which pretty much stays north all the time. It's a good thing to know if you're ever lost.

AIDAN

How can I get lost when I have you?

JOEL

I can't always be here for you,  
Aid.

AIDAN

Why not?

JOEL

It's just not in the cards, kiddo.  
Now do you want to go to bed or  
brush up on your hand-eye  
coordination?

AIDAN

I'll get the gloves!

JILL (O.S.)

Don't you two break anything!

Joel sets Aidan down as he toddles off.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Aidan returns struggling with the ball and gloves. Standing very close together Joel and Aidan play catch.

MONTAGE. Joel and Aidan play catch as time passes. Aidan grows. They stand farther apart as they play. Five years elapse.

INT. GREENHOUSE - FIVE YEARS LATER

8 year old Aidan tends to his small crop of spinach, beet roots, potatoes, and squash. Joel enters pulling jeans on.

JOEL

No beans this time around?

AIDAN

Nah. They take too long to undo at  
the end of the season.

JOEL

But they're good for you, they have  
protein.

AIDAN

So does the spinach and potatoes,  
and they're easier to grow.

JOEL  
 Sure they're easier here in this  
 controlled setting-

JILL (O.S.)  
 I gave him a great potato recipe!

<p>AIDAN          Wrap them in foil, stick them          in a fire, wait until they're          done.</p>	<p>JOEL          Wrap them in foil, stick in          fire, wait 'til done.</p>
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JOEL (CONT'D)  
 That's hardly a recipe!

JILL (O.S.)  
 Well, it makes food, right?

JOEL  
 I suppose it does.

MONTAGE. Joel and Aidan grow food in the greenhouse. Joel strings up beans. They enjoy potatoes over a grill. Two years elapse.

INT. AIDAN'S ROOM - TWO YEARS LATER

Joel in boxers looks for Aidan who isn't in his bed.

JOEL  
 Aidan? Aidan, where are you?

Aidan comes up behind Joel. He's dressed in a sleek space faring outfit.

AIDAN  
 Hi!

JOEL  
 Aidan, you scared me, why aren't  
 you in bed?

AIDAN  
 It's time to go.

JOEL  
 You know that?

AIDAN  
 Jill told me. But I'm ready. I feel  
 a pull.

Tears filled Joel's eyes.

JOEL

I know this is why I made you, but it's going to be hard to say goodbye. You're the best one yet. Can we have one last catch?

AIDAN

Sure, besides the lander won't launch for several hours.

JILL (O.S.)

But make it quick, fellas! Aidan can't miss his window.

Joel and Aidan walk down the hall and into an interior courtyard.

INT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

We look up to reveal the dazzling view of earth out of the courtyard's glass ceiling. As we return to Aidan and Joel we can't help but notice the technology of the space station they reside on.

Aidan and Joel pick up their gloves for one last catch.

AIDAN

Are there others like me down there?

They toss the ball between their conversation.

JOEL

I've sent others. But none like you, you're the very best.

AIDAN

Are there others like me up here?

JOEL

Not like you. I'll never make another like you.

AIDAN

Do you think I'm prepared?

JOEL

As prepared as I could get you. You're going to have a lot of challenges down there. But she's waiting for you. The Earth. She's yours now.

AIDAN  
Any last words of advice?

JOEL  
Now remember, if you swallow gum,  
it stays in your system for 7  
years.

AIDAN  
What's gum?

JILL (O.S.)  
Gum is a sweetened and flavored  
soft material that is chewed but  
not swallowed.

Joel rolls his eyes and he and Aidan laugh.

JOEL  
She always has to have the last  
word. Anyway, Aid, I was joking. I  
know you don't know about gum, I  
was just trying to pass along some  
wisdom that I heard once, a long  
time ago.

Jill's voice now comes from a nearby command station.

JILL  
It's almost time. Aidan, it's been  
nice knowing you.

AIDAN  
All this time, I thought you were  
stuck in the bedroom.

JOEL  
Just part of her programming until  
the end.

AIDAN  
Thanks for everything  
(beat)  
...Dad.

Aidan jogs off toward the lander. Joel holds back tears as he  
turns to the command station.

JOEL  
He's gone.

JILL  
I know. Time to make the next one?

JOEL

Soon. Right now let's watch him go.

Out the window the lander detaches from the ship and heads towards Earth.

EXT. SPACE STATION AND LANDER

Intercut as needed.

Joel's silhouette in boxers watches Aidan fly away.

Aidan through the lander window adjusts his waistband and smiles.

View of Earth, the lander, and the space station.

JILL-AS-NARRATOR

Children come and go, but one  
constant is what we wear. For true  
comfort, Joel wears Fruit of the  
Earth Cotton Boxers and he passes  
his love and his love of comfort  
along to his "sons." Fruit of the  
Earth Cotton Boxers, wear  
some...wherever you travel!