

and until that moment, no one had known her secret, or if anyone knew, he or she didn't mention it. Her behavior with sugar was her private habit, like the blue and yellow pills she took to keep her awake and thin, and she wanted no one, not even me, to find her out. I did the right thing when I returned to the dining room table with the can of cheese and looked at my brother and step-father blankly, not uttering a word about what I had seen.

Within time, my reward became apparent; my mother grew comfortable around me, and sugared her food, her beef, her baked chicken, her salad dressings, easily and often, secure that I would not judge her, secure in knowing that I lived there too, that I understood the sweetness she needed was necessary.

— Lisa Glatt

New York NY

THE APPLE

I played the Cagney prison scene
with my son,
We were in the auditorium
of a former mental institution,
turned medium security prison.
We sat at card table A-5,
ate junk from vending machines
and played double solitaire.

I left prison with an apple
shrink-wrapped in plastic.
Are naked apples dangerous?
Should prisoners be protected
from that wet, sweet juiciness?

I put the apple on my mantle
where it stayed for two months.
It rotted very slowly
without smelling
or attracting gnats.

I could have kept it longer
but the metaphors
disgusted me.