

## **Mommy Juice**

### **Sage Tyrle**

“Jesus,” says Sophie. “You get pregnant again and now you’re the Wine Police?” She pouts. “Officer, I only had one widdle dwinkee, can I pweese have my keys now?”

She reaches up, but I am taller by six inches. I say, “Soph, listen. You had five glasses. I counted. Look, let me round up the kids, I’ll drive you guys home. We’ll stop for cookies at the gluten-free place—”

Sophie leans against her SUV and sing-songs, “Twins! Playgroup is over!” She flings her arms wide and hits her hand on the side-view mirror. “Ow.”

My daughter waves from our doorway to the twins as they skip towards us, one twin saying, “Mommy, what are you guys doing?”

I say, “It’s...we’re playing Keep Away. Right, Mommy?”

Sophie puts her hands on my shoulders and hisses, “Give me my goddamn keys. Now.”

Is it weird to say I didn't notice? I didn't notice.

When I was pregnant with my daughter we were still in the city and the only mother I spent any time with was my own. Then when our daughter was three months old we found this gorgeous mid-century modern within walking distance of the best Waldorf school in Ontario, we moved, and all the books said finding a Mommy Group was vital to keeping my sanity.

So I sat in in playgroups by pools in Sunnybrook, leaned against granite countertops in Yorkville, pretended sculptures made of lava and bone in Forest Hill were just exquisite, and I guzzled bottles of wine just like all the other moms. Then I drove home.

But now I'm three months pregnant (we're calling him Updike, or maybe Cheever) and now—now I notice. The “Whoops!” and the scratches on the car doors. The bumps into recycling bins and the sunglassed faces out the driver-side windows calling, “Sorryyyy,” before lurching down the street. The Pierce family's tabby cat that no one's seen for a week. Right in the middle of Mommy and Me Yoga last week, the mom next to me suddenly plopped her toddler in my lap and tried to stand up but instead puked purple Rombauer Chardonnay all over her Manduka mat. The instructor said, “Oops, Mommy's had too much juice!” and everyone howled. I thought about the crowd of white SUVs in the yoga studio parking lot. But I didn't say anything.

The twins clamber into their car seats and Sophie leans in the back and fumbles with the straps. “Mommy, that one goes in *this* buckle,” says a twin, and Sophie snaps that she knows. They start chanting, “Let's go HOME let's go HOME let's go HOME.” My daughter calls from the doorway,

"It's time for *Paw Patrol*, Mommy," and Sophie shows her teeth in a smile. My arm is getting tired.

I wonder if Sophie will call the police if I don't give the keys back. And then I picture my daughter crying, asking why all the moms are mad at me, why the twins won't come over anymore. I lower my arm enough for Sophie to snatch at her keys. She sits in the driver's seat and snarls, "Ever pull that again, and there will be fucking *hell* to pay."

One of the twins shrieks, "Fucking hell! Fucking hell!" Sophie pulls out of my driveway and hits the recycling bin hard enough that it tips over.

I run to pile the green bottles back into the bin. Before the neighbours see.

Sage Tyrtle is a storyteller whose stories have been featured on NPR, CBC, and PBS. She is a Moth GrandSLAM winner. When she was five she wanted to be a princess until her dad explained that princesses live in a dystopian patriarchy, so she switched to being a writer instead. More: [www.tyrtle.com](http://www.tyrtle.com).