




Ethan Firsts

First-year, First-time Accomplishments

By his father, Ed

Photos by his parents,
Ed and Beth



An Ethan first: He took a breath.

Monday, April 21, 2008

(The blue boxes are Ethan firsts without photos.)

He pushed his bottle away
with both hands.

Thursday, April 24, 2008

He showed his first strong,
coordinated display of will power.

A newborn baby is lying on its belly on a white, textured blanket. The baby is wearing a light green, long-sleeved onesie with small white polka dots. The baby's head is turned to the right, and its eyes are partially open. In the background, there is a wooden chair with a tripod base and a window with a view of greenery outside. The room has a blue carpet.

Another Ethan first: He rolled over.

Saturday, April 26, 2008

He can only go one way: from his belly to his back.

He slept through the night.

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

This, as it turned out, was to be a one-night occurrence. However, it would be only another 17 days until he repeated the feat regularly.



Another Ethan first: He smiled.

Friday, June 6, 2008

He spoke in seal.

Wednesday, July 2, 2008

Daddy asked, "Can you talk like a seal? Orr. Orr."
He said, "Orr."

He giggled.

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

He held his bottle.

Thursday, July 31, 2008

He played peek-a-boo.

Wednesday, August 20, 2008


He ate with a spoon.

Friday, August 29, 2008

A photograph of a baby crawling on a white blanket on a sandy beach. The baby is wearing a white cardigan over a light blue shirt with a blue bow. The background shows the ocean with waves and a blue sky with white clouds.

Another Ethan first: He crawled.

Friday, October 10, 2008

A baby is sitting up in a white crib, wearing a white long-sleeved onesie with a small blue pattern. The baby is holding a large, light-colored stuffed rabbit. In the background, there is a yellow and white checkered blanket and a green toy basket containing various stuffed animals. The crib has white vertical slats.

Another Ethan first: He sat up.

Saturday, October 12, 2008

He grabbed my glasses.

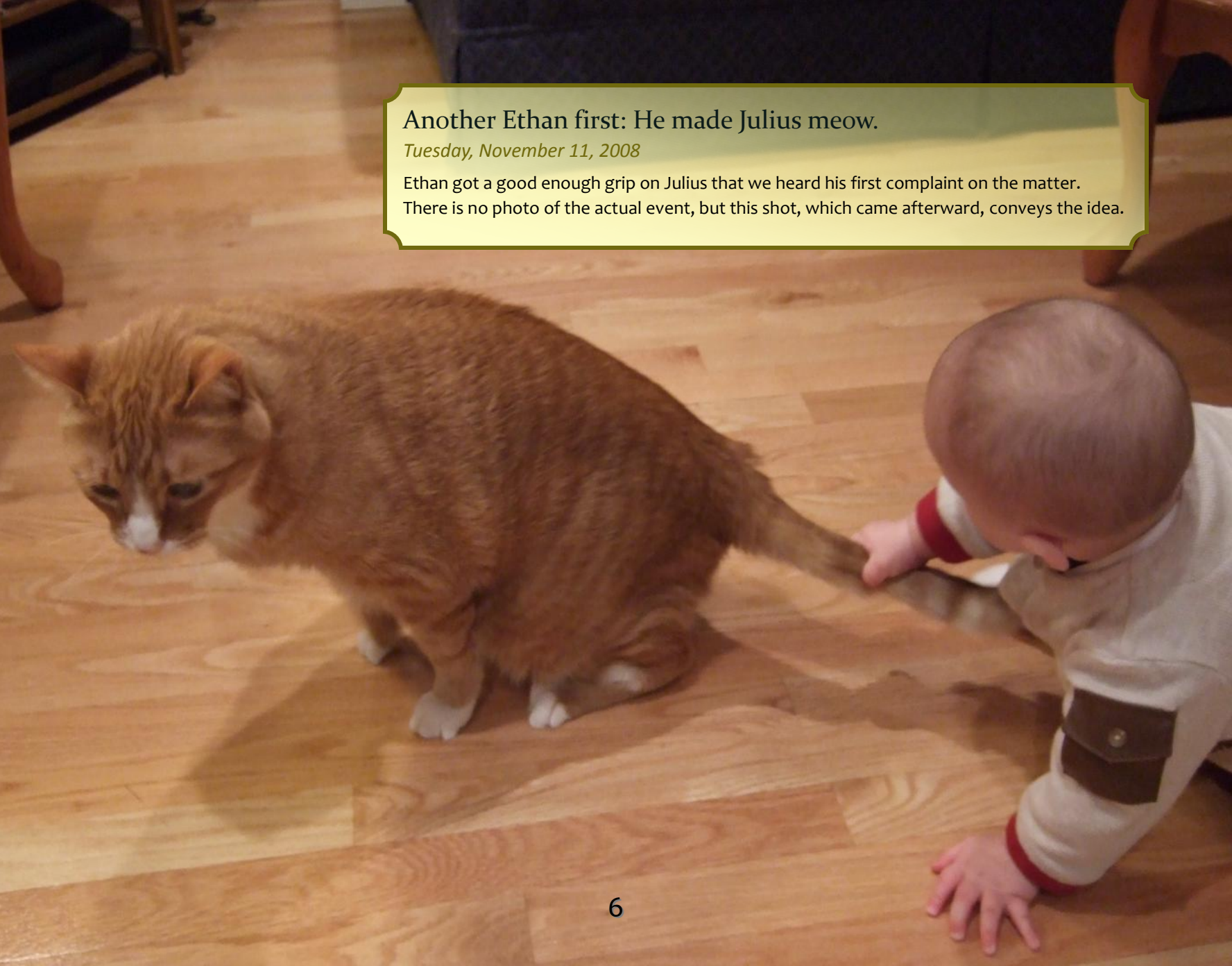
Sunday, November 9, 2008

He probably would have taken them off my head if I'd let him. He put a quality thumb smudge on the left lens. Ethan has been getting hold of Mommy's accessories for a while; today, it was finally Daddy's turn.

Another Ethan first: He made Julius meow.

Tuesday, November 11, 2008

Ethan got a good enough grip on Julius that we heard his first complaint on the matter. There is no photo of the actual event, but this shot, which came afterward, conveys the idea.



Another Ethan first: He stood up to greet us.

Sunday, November 16, 2008

This morning when we went to get Ethan from the crib, we found him standing at the edge waiting for us. It turned out to be just the beginning. This afternoon, he was playing in the living room and discovered how to pull himself up on the lower shelf of an end table. Then this evening, he wanted to see better what was on his activity center, so up he stood to get a good look.



Another Ethan first: He crawled on hands and feet (no knees).

Tuesday, November 18, 2008

Today Ethan discovered a much faster—and more entertaining—mode of transportation.



Another Ethan first: He made a blowfish on the window.

Wednesday, December 3, 2008





Another Ethan first: He toppled a tower of blocks.

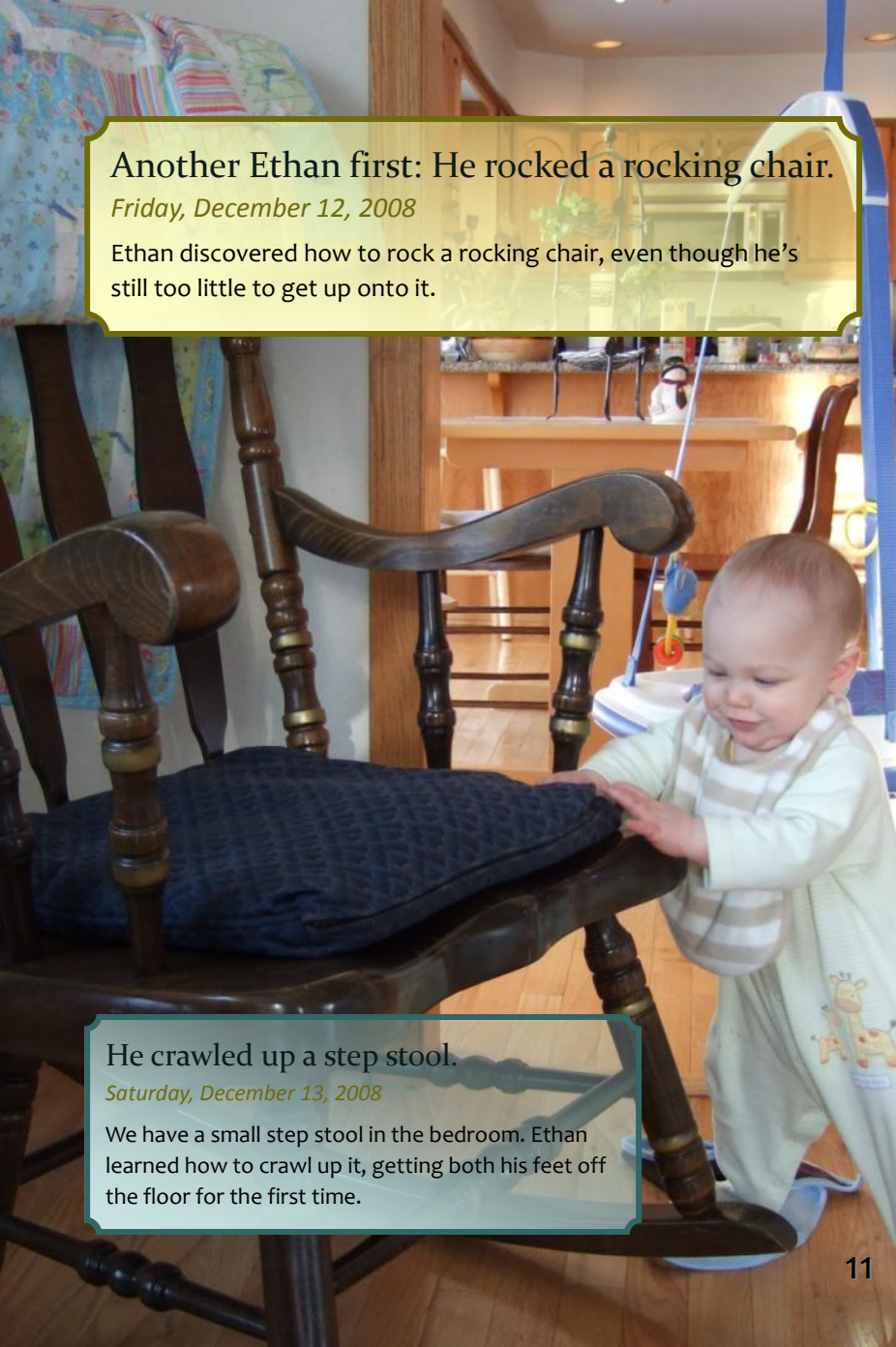
Saturday, December 6, 2008

We bought Ethan some blocks about a week ago and decided he couldn't wait until Christmas. Right away, he discovered the joy of entropy.

Another Ethan first: He rocked a rocking chair.

Friday, December 12, 2008

Ethan discovered how to rock a rocking chair, even though he's still too little to get up onto it.



He crawled up a step stool.

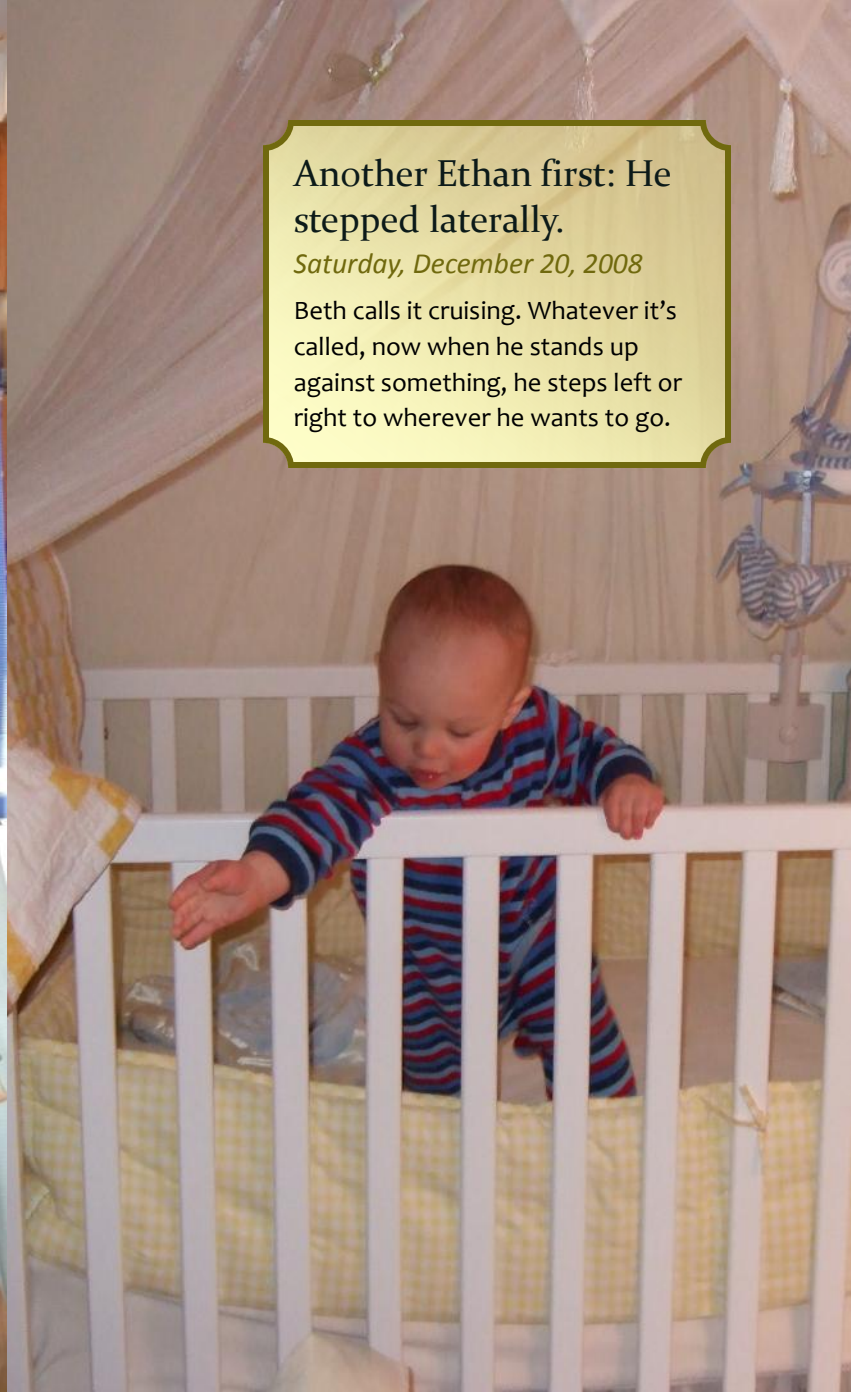
Saturday, December 13, 2008

We have a small step stool in the bedroom. Ethan learned how to crawl up it, getting both his feet off the floor for the first time.

Another Ethan first: He stepped laterally.

Saturday, December 20, 2008

Beth calls it cruising. Whatever it's called, now when he stands up against something, he steps left or right to wherever he wants to go.





Another Ethan first: He tossed all his bunnies out of his crib.

Sunday, December 21, 2008

Over the last week or so, we've found stuffed rabbits on the floor in the morning, but the last couple nights, Ethan has been more systematic. Blanky-Bye Bun, Lulla Bunny-Bye, Big Blanky Bun are all getting thrown overboard—multiple times if they are brave enough to rejoin their flight instructor in the crib.

Another Ethan first: He discovered his toes.

Tuesday, December 23, 2008

Ethan found another form of built-in entertainment. Employing his youthful elasticity, he's been enjoying the goodness of toe sucking, especially during diaper changing time.



Another Ethan first:
He drank a whole
bottle holding it
himself.

Sunday, January 4, 2009

We've always used glass bottles with Ethan, since the chemical Bisphenol A leaches out of most plastic bottles. Glass bottles are heavier and have no handles, making them more difficult to hold. But he's got the hang of it now and can drink the bottle down all by himself.

He picked up his toys (as an extension).

Sunday, January 4, 2009

I was holding Ethan in church as usual, and, as usual, he managed to drop his stuffed animal on the floor. After I picked it up a couple times, I realized that Ethan might be ready to assist with the recovery process. The next time the kangaroo (yes, it wasn't a bunny!) hit the floor, I held Ethan mostly upside down so that he could reach the toy. He grasped it, then I retracted my personal arm extender, and we were back in business with Kangaroo and Joey.

He put his toy away (temporarily).

Wednesday, January 7, 2009

Such a good boy: he cleaned up without even being asked, crawling over to his toy box with his bunny rattle and tossing it in. Seconds after the job was done, it was back to play time with the rattle, making the victory short lived.

He freed himself from his wrist rattle.

Wednesday, January 7, 2009

Since long before Ethan would grasp objects for any length of time, we occasionally attached a rattle to his wrist to keep him entertained. For a while now, there hasn't been much call for that, but today, for old time's sake, Mommy tried.

We found that Ethan is no longer as accommodating to the idea as he once was. First, he tried to shake the rattle off, which only served as comic frustration. Next, he switched to using his newly acquired teeth, which were the key to bunny rattle freedom.

During dinner, we were playing around, and he bit my nose. Something felt unusual. I checked, and sure enough, he has a top tooth poking through to oppose the bottom ones. They sure worked well for the budding escape artist!

He drove his truck.

Wednesday, January 7, 2009

He may be still in first gear for now, but he's moving.

He stood on his own, momentarily.

Friday, January 8, 2009

This morning, Beth put Ethan down on his feet. Normally, he sits down as soon as you let go, but this time he stayed standing, balancing himself, for about two seconds.

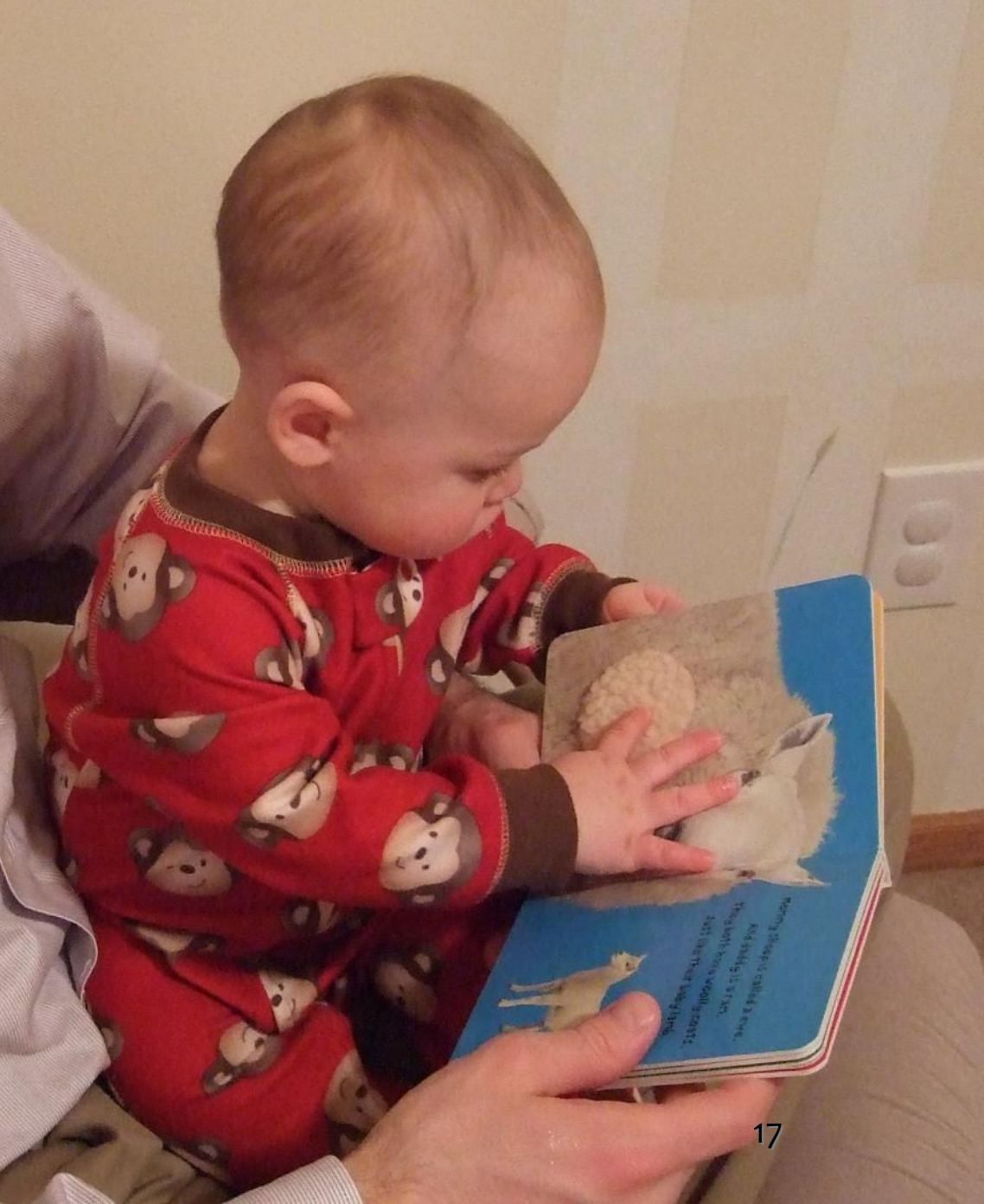




Another Ethan first: He demonstrated his bigness.

Friday, January 8, 2009

Grandma has been asking our boy, “How big is Ethan?” for months now, giving him the answer, “So big!”, and teaching him how to raise his hands to show us. Mommy has likewise been encouraging Ethan lately. Today, Ethan caught on and now gives us a visual answer himself.



**Another Ethan first:
He felt all the animals
in his book.**

Sunday, January 11, 2009

Until now, Ethan has not shown much interest in his bedtime books, other than as something to eat. This evening, while Beth rehearsed with her violin duo, I read Ethan a book with tactile pictures of farm animals. He was patient and still, and carefully felt each animal. He didn't seem disappointed that the book had no bunnies or kitties; he already knows what they feel like.

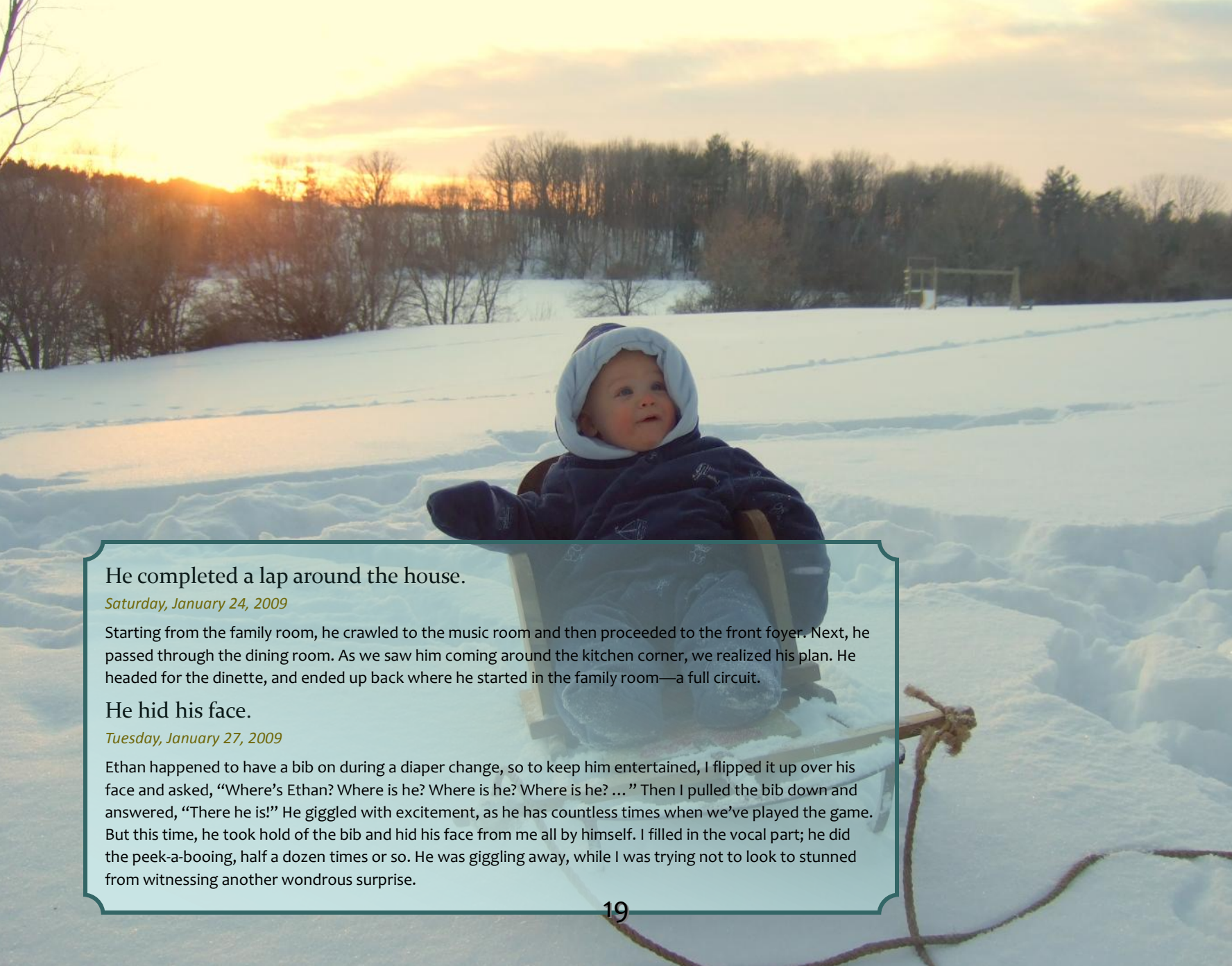


Another Ethan first: He drank on his own in his high chair.

Friday, January 16, 2009

Ethan has been holding his bottle while in our arms for a couple weeks now. When he was in his high chair, Beth gave him some juice in his BPA-free plastic bottle. He took it by the handles and drank it all. Beth just provided the refills.

The good news is that even though he knows he can drink on his own, he doesn't mind still being held—because we're not ready to give that up.



He completed a lap around the house.

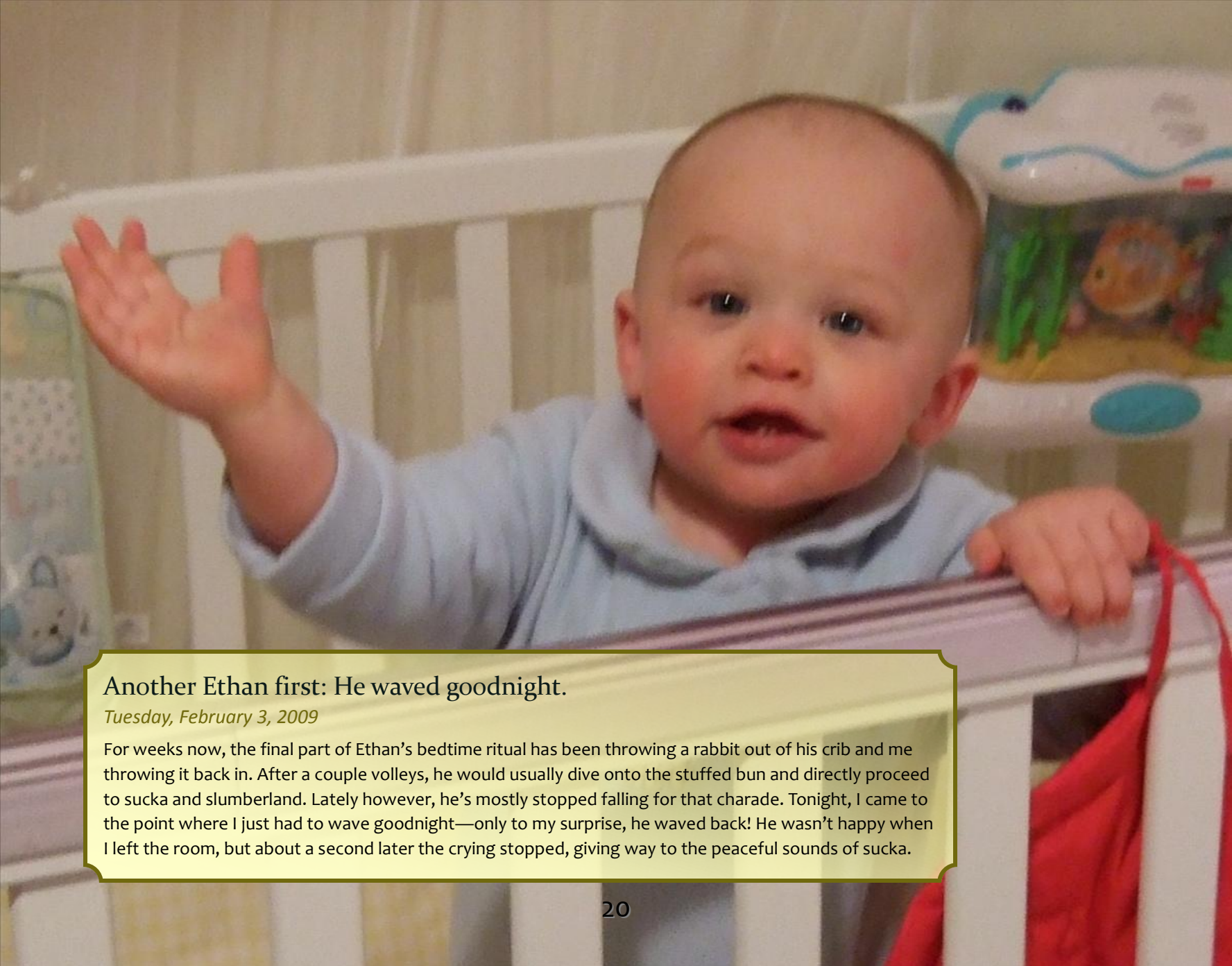
Saturday, January 24, 2009

Starting from the family room, he crawled to the music room and then proceeded to the front foyer. Next, he passed through the dining room. As we saw him coming around the kitchen corner, we realized his plan. He headed for the dinette, and ended up back where he started in the family room—a full circuit.

He hid his face.

Tuesday, January 27, 2009


Ethan happened to have a bib on during a diaper change, so to keep him entertained, I flipped it up over his face and asked, “Where’s Ethan? Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? ...” Then I pulled the bib down and answered, “There he is!” He giggled with excitement, as he has countless times when we’ve played the game. But this time, he took hold of the bib and hid his face from me all by himself. I filled in the vocal part; he did the peek-a-booing, half a dozen times or so. He was giggling away, while I was trying not to look stunned from witnessing another wondrous surprise.



Another Ethan first: He waved goodnight.

Tuesday, February 3, 2009

For weeks now, the final part of Ethan's bedtime ritual has been throwing a rabbit out of his crib and me throwing it back in. After a couple volleys, he would usually dive onto the stuffed bun and directly proceed to sucka and slumberland. Lately however, he's mostly stopped falling for that charade. Tonight, I came to the point where I just had to wave goodnight—only to my surprise, he waved back! He wasn't happy when I left the room, but about a second later the crying stopped, giving way to the peaceful sounds of sucka.



He said “Mama”.

Friday, February 6, 2009

Inspired by Ethan’s baby words, I’ve been asking him at bedtime for weeks now if he could talk. Every night, I ask with pronounced articulation, “Can you Mommy, and Daddy, and Ethan, and Buo?” (Buo is Ethan’s nickname; it’s pronounced like boo and is short for buoy.) He knows that along with “Buo” comes a barrage of kisses and tickles. He responds with anticipatory giggles and subsequent laughter, but no answer to my question. In contrast, Mommy’s been taking a simpler approach, and now when we ask, “Can you say Mama?”, he says “Mama” back, especially when it’s the Mama who’s asking.

Another Ethan first: He engaged Daddy in monkey talk.

Monday, February 9, 2009

Ethan is a fountain of sound. He giggles, coos, squeals, and grunts. He makes raspberries and is forming words. Some of his sounds defy description, and most are beyond me to imitate. One that I can, however, is his monkey sounds. Before bedtime he made a monkey noise, and I monkeyed back at him. He laughed and replied in kind, and we carried on the conversation for a couple minutes.



Another Ethan first: He clapped his hands.

Sunday, February 15, 2009

Grandma has a knack for encouraging our boy. She was persistent for months, coaxing Ethan into raising his hands to show us how he's "So big!" Her patience has paid off. Mommy and Daddy have likewise long been helping Ethan learn to clap hands, but it was the visit from grandma this weekend and her special touch that won the applause of little Ethan.



Another Ethan first: He walked behind his walker.

Wednesday, February 18, 2009


Ethan has been improving his balance. When he is standing at the coffee table, he no longer needs to crawl to get to the sofa: he can stand momentarily in between. Yet his most obvious display of stability came today when he was using his walker toy. He stood behind it and took step after step until he had walked from one end of the room to the other.



Another Ethan first: He clapped his hands audibly.

Friday, February 20, 2009

A casual, baby form of clapping hands was sufficient for Ethan for a total of five days. Today, he decided to be like everyone else with a proper, flat-handed, palm-smacking applause.



Another Ethan first: He went sledding.

Sunday, February 22, 2009

Twenty degrees and beautiful powdered snow—a perfect day for a sled ride. Ethan held himself steady with his hands while Daddy pulled him up and down and up and down the hill in the backyard.

Another Ethan first: He spun a top.

Tuesday, February 24, 2009





Another Ethan first: He played ball.

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Ethan loves balls: little grippy balls, larger-than-life beach balls, even foam blocks with holes for little fingers that aren't really balls at all. We got to toss the balls back and forth for the first time today, because now when he throws and rolls them, it's with a direction and purpose.

Another Ethan first: He put a hexagonal
peg through a hexagonal hole.

Friday, February 27, 2009

He tried putting it through a triangular hole first, but
that's one of those life lessons everyone has to learn.





Another Ethan first: He signed “more” and “all done”.


Saturday, February 28, 2009

When Ethan’s tummy says “no more; I’m full”, his natural reaction is to turn away and spitza, sometimes sending his meal flying for effect. A more civilized approach is to communicate with sign language. Ethan is too little to articulate words, so instead we’ve been teaching him to tell us what he wants with his hands. Today, it clicked—just in time to help bring order to the otherwise chaotic world of squishy finger foods.

He roared like a lion.

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

Ethan picked up a new animal sound. Eight months ago it was the seal, one month ago the monkey. Today, when I suggested to Ethan to “play with your lion, grrrrr”, he let loose a compelling lion roar of his own.



**Another Ethan first:
He walked on his own.**

Tuesday, March 15, 2009

Beth was playing with Ethan while talking on the phone to Grandma. I sat down nearby and held out my hand, which Ethan took hold of as he stood up. I motioned for Beth to hold up her hand, and Ethan transferred his balance support from my hand to hers, then back to me, and back to Mommy again. I backed up and held out my hand again. Ethan came, all on his own, walking toward me. He made it three steps before losing balance and plopping safely down.

Grandma and Ethan wondered what all the subsequent cheering and excitement was about. We described the scene to grandma; we'll explain to Ethan later.



Another Ethan first: He stood up and stayed standing.

Monday, March 16, 2009

Ethan has found a reliable balance, at least when stationary. Today, he stood tall and strong all on his own for a good two minutes. He was well planted without a hint of the wobbles.

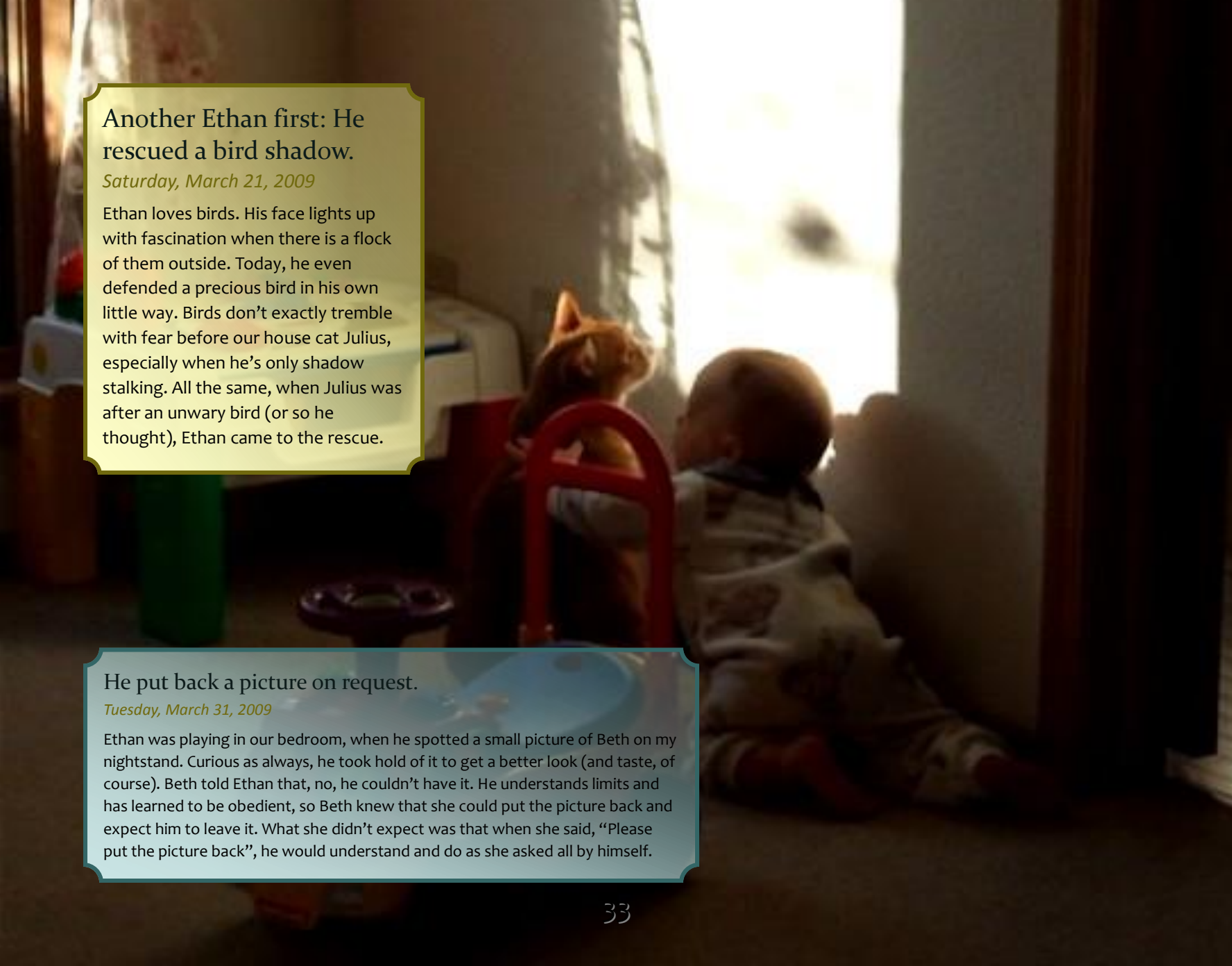




**Another Ethan first:
He climbed up and
down the stairs.**

Saturday, March 21, 2009

Ethan is becoming more adventurous, and his goals more lofty. He started climbing the stairs on Friday. We were eating dinner with friends, a time when Ethan often plays around on the floor. When things got suspiciously quiet, we looked for Ethan, finding him a couple steps up the stairway. Today, he went further, making a round trip more than half way up and all the way back down. It would be only a couple more days before he would reach the summit.



Another Ethan first: He rescued a bird shadow.

Saturday, March 21, 2009

Ethan loves birds. His face lights up with fascination when there is a flock of them outside. Today, he even defended a precious bird in his own little way. Birds don't exactly tremble with fear before our house cat Julius, especially when he's only shadow stalking. All the same, when Julius was after an unwary bird (or so he thought), Ethan came to the rescue.

He put back a picture on request.

Tuesday, March 31, 2009


Ethan was playing in our bedroom, when he spotted a small picture of Beth on my nightstand. Curious as always, he took hold of it to get a better look (and taste, of course). Beth told Ethan that, no, he couldn't have it. He understands limits and has learned to be obedient, so Beth knew that she could put the picture back and expect him to leave it. What she didn't expect was that when she said, "Please put the picture back", he would understand and do as she asked all by himself.



Another Ethan first: He dressed himself.

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

Ethan discovered how to remove his socks some time ago, although he hasn't amused himself that way very often. Now we have better insight into why. He seems to be developing an appreciation for the thought that Mommy puts into selecting his handsome wardrobe. He's also finding that it's not as easy as she makes it look. This morning while Beth thought he was "just playing" in the nursery, he was really trying his hand at apparel selection. When she came in to get him ready for the day, was she ever surprised to find him a step ahead of her, dressed and ready to go. (I remember when he was little.) Beth says she'll work with him on some of the fine points of fashion and getting all his limbs through the necessary holes, but even if he looks a bit silly, he's no April Fool.

A photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a maroon dress, standing on a wooden path in a park. To her right, a baby in a white long-sleeved shirt and white pants is sitting on a black swing. The baby is smiling and pointing towards the camera. The background shows a grassy area with many bare trees, suggesting a park in early spring. A green metal pole is visible on the right side of the frame.

He said “Dadda”.


Thursday, April 2, 2009

Right before Ethan’s second word came a refinement of his first. I asked him if he could say “Mama”. As usual, he did, only this time instead of his normal elongated articulation of each diphone, his cadence and tone matched mine exactly. His utterance of the word sounded just like mine. Then I asked him a couple times if he could say “Dadda”. Instead of the confused look and occasional “Mama” I’m used to getting, both times I got to hear from my boy the sweet-sounding word I’ve been waiting for.

He handed me a toy.

Tuesday, April 14, 2009

Ethan and I were playing around his toy doorway. The toy also has a window that Ethan likes to open and find me hiding behind. Sometimes, I give him something through the window or the door. Today Ethan caught on, and now he likes giving me objects, too.



Another Ethan first: He turned off a noisemaker toy.

Thursday, April 16, 2009

When it comes to developing character, they say more is caught than taught. Ethan was playing with a toy train that, when he presses its chimney, begins moving and musically invites all within earshot to “hop on board the animal train”. Within the last few weeks, he’s become familiar with starting and restarting the sequence. This evening, without any direct instruction, or even an example within the last couple weeks, he came to understand that when he’s done with the toy, he can press the chimney again to make it stop. And he agrees with me that this is a good thing to do. Ahhh, silence.

He walked across the room.

Thursday, April 16, 2009

Ethan's balance continues to improve. This evening he made two trips, and almost a third, from Grandma on one end of the room to me on the other.



He mounted his truck.

Thursday, April 16, 2009


Ethan has known how to get off his truck since he started riding it, although his initial dismount style of falling off like a log was a bit less than graceful. He has since learned to step off with the help of the coffee table. Getting on is now just as effortless, even without supporting furniture. Ethan puts a leg over, climbs on, and starts scooting around.

He fed Mopsy and Daddy.

Monday, April 21, 2009

Yesterday, Ethan picked up some hay and put it in front of Mopsy's mouth. Mopsy, our house rabbit, took the hay and tossed it. Today, on his birthday, Ethan took a piece of toast meant for him and put it in Daddy's mouth. I was more appreciative than Mopsy; it was good toast. Tonight will be the real test: will he share his birthday cake?



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- 1 He took a breath.
 - 1 He pushed his bottle away with both hands.
 - 2 He rolled over.
 - 2 He slept through the night.
 - 3 He smiled.
 - 3 He spoke in seal.
 - 3 He giggled.
 - 3 He held his bottle.
 - 3 He played peek-a-boo.
 - 3 He ate with a spoon.
 - 4 He crawled.
 - 5 He sat up.
 - 5 He grabbed my glasses.
 - 6 He made Julius meow.
 - 7 He stood up to greet us.
 - 8 He crawled on hands and feet (no knees).
 - 9 He made a blowfish on the window.
 - 10 He toppled a tower of blocks.
 - 11 He rocked a rocking chair.
 - 12 He crawled up a step stool.
 - 12 He stepped laterally.
 - 12 He tossed all his bunnies out of his crib.
 - 13 He discovered his toes.
 - 14 He drank a whole bottle holding it himself.
 - 15 He picked up his toys (as an extension).
 - 15 He freed himself from his wrist rattle.
 - 15 He put his toy away (temporarily).
 - 15 He drove his truck.
 - 15 He stood on his own, momentarily.

- 16 He demonstrated his bigness.
- 17 He felt all the animals in his book.
- 18 He drank on his own in his high chair.
- 19 He completed a lap around the house.
- 20 He hid his face.
- 20 He waved goodnight.
- 21 He said "Mama".
- 21 He engaged Daddy in monkey talk.
- 22 He clapped his hands.
- 23 He walked behind his walker.
- 24 He clapped his hands audibly.
- 25 He went sledding.
- 26 He spun a top.
- 27 He played ball.
- 28 He put a hexagonal peg through a hexagonal hole.
- 29 He signed "more" and "all done".
- 29 He roared like a lion.
- 30 He walked on his own.
- 31 He stood up and stayed standing.
- 32 He climbed up and down the stairs.
- 33 He rescued a bird shadow.
- 33 He put back a picture on request.
- 34 He dressed himself.
- 35 He said "Dadda".
- 35 He handed me a toy.
- 36 He turned off a noisemaker toy.
- 37 He walked across the room.
- 37 He mounted his truck.
- 37 He fed Mopsy and Daddy.