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“My wife and I are divided about whether it was inevitable, or if something caused it, but we do have video of Jackson at eighteen months, coming up to the camera and talking. But soon afterward his language stopped developing, and eventually he lost the language skills he already had. He stopped responding to his name. You could even bang pots and pans behind him, and he wouldn’t respond. But when we tested his hearing, it was fine. People would say: ‘Boys develop later.’ Or: ‘Don’t worry, my daughter didn’t begin talking until she was three.’” But we knew it was something more. This was twenty years ago, so the doctors didn’t even know what to tell us. The head of pediatrics at Columbia met with us, and said: ‘Let me do some research on autism and I’ll get back to you.’ We started to worry that Jackson might never progress. Around this time, I overheard some acquaintances worrying that their four-year-old son might be gay. It made me so mad. I thought: ‘Give me a fucking break. You know that your child can grow to be happy, independent, and fall in love. I’d trade anything for that knowledge, and you’re freaking out that your son might be gay.’”