

The moon hung high above the earth. White as a balloon.

And there along a small square of the desert floor, the boy lay on his back, flying his stuffed rabbit overhead, whizzing it up, up, and away deep into outer space.

*Vroooooommm, vrooooooom*, the boy whispered, careful not to wake his Mama or Papa who lay next to him, snoring their tired snores. Like all days before this, their travels had been long and hard, and they were dead tired. So too was the boy, but he had yet to put his best friend to bed on the near side of the white balloon moon like he did every night out here.

To watch over them.

To make sure they stayed safe.

Sleepy-eyed, the boy steered his rabbit in outstretched arms just like how Papa used to take him for rides through their apartment before they'd left home. Despite the thousands of kilometers traveled, the boy could still feel his father's hard grip under his armpits as he was flown down their apartment hallway, ducking underneath door jambs, dodging the living room furniture until they landed in the small kitchen where Mama stood in her yellow apron, whisking something sweet in a saucepan.

"Hilfe, hilfe," Vati would bellow, making out-of-control airplane sounds as they narrowly missed household objects—the bookshelf, the coffee table, the record player, the small kitchen table.

In those moments of feigned emergency distress, Papa would tuck the boy under his arm like a rugby ball and sneak a kiss along Mama's neck. Then, behind her back, Papa would dip his finger into the simmering pan and dab the chocolaty goodness into the boy's mouth.

"Ssshhh," Vati would put his finger to his mouth and wriggle his thick rust-colored eyebrows at the boy, making them slither up and down his forehead like red furry caterpillars.