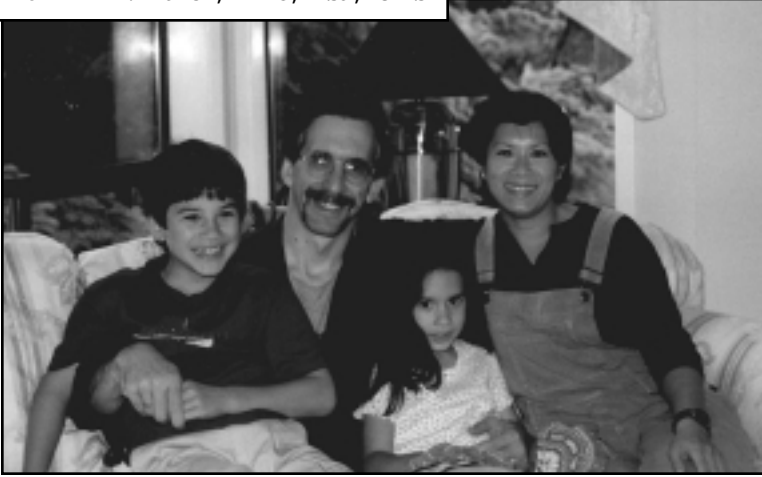


FROM LEFT: Eamon, Mike, Isa, Cris



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE FORDS

(or The Tenacity of a Nine-Year-Old)

by Cris Ford

Cris wakes up, late for jogging, but she decides to go out and do it anyway. Mike was up late writing, as usual, so he is sleeping in. Isa hears the footsteps and wakes Eamon. The kids settle down to read in the living room, not being hungry for breakfast.

This morning, Eamon is reading *Harry Potter* and Isa's choice is *Aesop's Fables*. Isa suddenly lets loose a belly laugh and shares something she has read with Eamon. They both laugh and play their conversation game of What If? Eamon, deciding that he's tired of reading, starts drawing a diagram of submarine warfare, leaving it uncolored.

Eamon



He rarely has the patience for coloring. Isa, still in her nightgown and undone hair, starts taking out her menagerie of tiny plastic toys. Cris breezes in, flushed and dripping from a sudden downpour, and after greeting the kids, reminds Eamon to unload the dishwasher and tells Isa to get dressed. Cris ignores the resulting comments, and heads for a warm shower, having been fortified by fresh air and increased blood circulation. She is followed.

--Mommy, can I have a sugar-cube?
--No, you haven't had breakfast yet.
--After breakfast can I have a sugar-cube?
--Okay, if you have a good one.
--Can I have it with my breakfast?
--Okay, I guess.
--What's for breakfast?
--A sugar pastry.

At breakfast, during which they all sit down together at the table, Eamon asks if they can all go on a bike ride. The answer is yes--as soon as he and Isa finish their math worksheets. A sound like a cross between a lion trying to clear his throat and

a squealing pig follows, though nobody has to look up to know who it's coming from.

A sweet angelic voice says, *I'll do my math!*

Eamon looks shocked, then replies, *Okay, I will too, but I won't like it.*

--*I'll do five pages! I'll do yours, too, Eamon!*

--*No, you won't! I'll finish mine before you!*

A few minutes later, Eamon shouts triumphantly, *I finished! And I did more than you asked me to!*

--*Good job, Eamon, I'm so proud of you!*

On the bike ride, Eamon is leading, as usual, with the rest of the family struggling to keep up. Gee, it *SURE* is windy today. They are riding against the wind. Eamon motions for a time-out.

--*My back hurts!*

--*Why?*

--*I don't know!*

--*Are you tired?*

--*No! I can't be tired!*

--*Maybe you just need a break. We've been riding against the wind.*

--*No! I think I just need to pee.*

On the return home the wind still seem to be against them. Sweaty and tired, they pull the bikes into the garage.

--*Thanks for the ride, Daddy!*

--*You're welcome. We'll go again soon, OK?*

--*Yaay! This afternoon?*

For lunch, Eamon cleans out the fridge, and Isa has a piece of buttered bread and a hotdog. The kids soon start competing for foot space under the table.

Isa gets sent to the other room since she can't stop provoking her brother. Occasional sighs and sounds of despair are heard from the other room.

--*Okay, Isa, you can come back now.*

--*No! Since you want me to, I won't!*

The remaining table companions exchange looks, and normal conversation resumes. When Isa feels she has been forgotten, she returns, eating the rest of her lunch and finally forgetting the whole incident. After lunch, the kids help clear the table, and Eamon starts preparing to do a project he has just thought of. Isa then begins to draw pictures to paint, humming Celtic tunes from her favorite CD, *Fits of Passion*.

When Eamon finishes, he shows everyone the medieval map he has designed, complete with legend and scale in both miles and kilometers. He repeats his guided tour, twice, even though Mike and Cris are sitting in the same room. Isa looks up, and rushes to finish her picture. She paints an ocean, in which an

Isa



(continued on page 17)