

## greek tragedy: brownies make friends

**Whenever** a new neighbor **moved into** our **neighborhood**, my mother **insisted we introduce ourselves**, welcoming the strangers into the area with baked goods. We made brownies when the O'Myra family moved in, six houses from **ours**. It was **the one time I remember wanting to help out** in the house, when there was a bowl **to lick** and **uneven edges** to sample. **Once** they'd **cooled** from the oven and **were cut into squares** the tasting began. **It turned out an** ingredient **had been forgotten**. Someone suggested that maybe **there** wasn't enough sugar. "We can't give them **these**," my mother said.

"Yeah, they're **gross**," my sister added, her mouth full of brownie, her hand **reaching for** another piece. We brought them **over anyway**, and **years later I babysat** the O'Myra children. Daniel **dipped** his pretzels in his apple juice. I **wasn't allowed to** turn on a television, **not even for** a Disney movie. I didn't **last long as** their babysitter. They **wanted me to play** airplane or **horse around** with them. No one wanted to play barbies. They were **too active for my taste**.

**The Jaeger family** lived in that house before the O'Myra's **settled in**. Janene and Ellyse, adopted sisters, were my friends. Ellyse had red **hair** like **mine**, but **since** she was **a year older**, I was more **friendly with** Janene. I don't know **why this was**. I think I **might have given** Ellyse a haircut once and cut **off** all her bangs. This was back in a time when we were friends with our neighbors, where we baked them things with walnuts and lard **without being worried about** allergies. **That's how friends were made**, or babysitters. Connections **were made**.

I don't know any of my neighbors here, and **I've never been given** anything baked from **a stranger**. When I moved in, I baked a loaf of banana bread, **though** I used whole wheat flour, **complete with** walnuts and chocolate chips. I **wrapped** thick slices of it up and gave it to the women who **run** the **rental office** of our development. I try to **do my part**.

**Mostly**, I've made friends **through** the blog. Austinites **have reached out**, offering themselves **as guides**. It **only** really **takes making** one new friend because they usually have their group of friends, and **eventually** you **all** meet. **As far as I remember**, baked goods were only once **involved**, when Katie (the co-worker of **a** blog reader) invited me to her house for a **housewarming party**, and my friend Wendy brought a box of warm cookies. I **fell in friend-love with** Wendy **right then and there**.