

June 7, 2020

To my golden boy,

I want to tell you a bit about our thoughts as we chose your name.

Austin is long for Au and short for Augustine, which comes from Augustus. Austin is most associated with the capital of Texas, "the Athens of the South", and while we do not feel any strong connection with the city, it is notable as a center of cultural fusion: a blue city in a red state, and a mixing ground for Mexican and American culture. Perhaps we liked the name so much because you were born after three years of living in London, feeling a bit like a cultural dissonance ourselves and missing home. I also like that your name comes from a saint who is best known for his sins.

You are named after the chemical symbol for gold, Au ($\odot$), the most versatile of the metals, in honor of your great-grandmother, Goldie Newman. Goldie was a center and matriarch of the Newman family, and we would come to her house for Passover and Thanksgiving every year, no matter where we lived. She was a lover of learning and books, and all the family's children. Goldie died on May 17, 2020, aged 96, just a month before you were born.

Augustus was an honorific given to the Roman emperors, a sign of respect and a recognition of greatness along with their violet cloak. Like those emperors, we recognize the greatness in you, no matter what you choose to do with it. It is our small act of abolition against the couriers of Kafka.

Paz (פז) is your Hebrew name, and it also means golden. As a Jew, you receive a second name directly from the Torah as it was written over 2500 years ago, and "all of Zion's fountains are in you" (Psalm 87 (פז)). The word is used in Proverb 8, where the fruits of wisdom are said to be finer than gold. My own search for wisdom has meant so much to me that I hope you will agree. Another meaning of פז is "puzzles", which we will let you puzzle out for yourself.

We also like Paz because it means "peace" in Spanish. In the Lutheran church, the church of your father's family, our greeting is to say, "Peace be with you." Long before your mother and I met, I felt an affinity for this name through the character of Professor Bernardo de la Paz, a revolutionary who lived on the moon.

Reed was your biological grandfather's middle name, and his maternal grandfather's before him. Your biological grandfather was a man who loved nature and loved Science Fiction. I think he would have appreciated passing on a bit of the natural world in his name, for a plant that lives in the swamps but reaches for the stars.

Rising is your family name, reaching back along your male line to the first Rising who came over to America from England (by way of London) in 1635. His name was James, like mine. The name "Rising" probably comes from the land around Castle Rising in Norfolk, England, which

we took you to while you were in the womb, and that name goes back to the Domesday Book. Its most famous inhabitant, Queen Isabella, was a great leader who brought peace to England and Scotland, though it took a revolution to do it. While Isabella loved her crown of gold, we hope you love your name after the City of the Violet Crown.

Love through the ages,
Dad