

# How to cut an onion without tears, that art app, snow days, and growing crystals (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

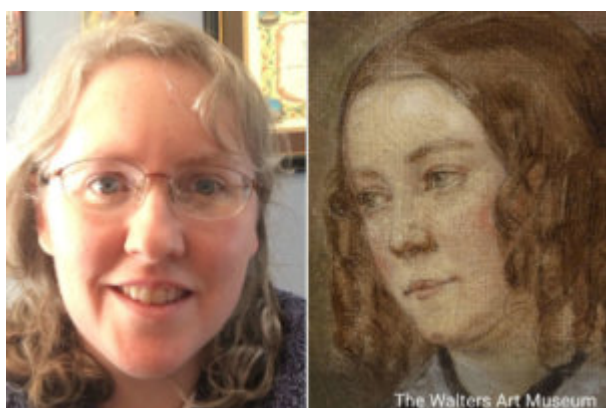
For years and years I have cried while cutting onions. Then a few months ago, one of our boys was watching the Science Channel when he saw an ad saying that if you stick out your tongue while slicing an onion, you won't cry.

It sounded crazy, but it was worth a try. And I have to tell you, it works. It doesn't always work perfectly, but it works so much better than what I had been doing, which was resulting in painful eyes and waterfalls of tears.

Apparently you can also chew gum or run water nearby, but this is the only method I have tried. And yes, I feel guilty for not sharing this with you sooner.

Did you learn anything new last year?

~2~



Have you tried being matched with famous paintings through the Google Arts and Culture App? I love this idea of old meeting new, art history meeting technology.

Our boys and I tried it, and they were matched with faces from Asian paintings, while I was matched with a painting that lives at the Walters Art Museum. I was so pleased to be side by side with a painting in our favorite art museum in Baltimore.

We tried to use the app with Leo's stuffed Cat in the Hat and some of the other stuffed animals, but the app refused to recognize them as faces.

Still, it is really fun.

~3~

We're learning about prayer in our Orange curriculum at Sunday school, and last week Leo brought home a prayer he wrote: "Lord, please help my brother in school. Amen."

I was so touched, especially when Leo told me it was the first prayer he thought of.

~4~

We had a snow day this week! Snow days are a little chaotic around here because my husband and I both work, but the boys had a fantastic time on their day off. I made chocolate chip pancakes to begin the day, and somehow powdered sugar went everywhere.



In fact, there may have been more powdered sugar on the table than there was snow on the grass, but the boys ran out and played in it for a long time.

Nothing beats a surprise day off from school.

~5~

The other day I was driving with Daniel, and he suddenly said, "I have a really interesting history of my life."

"Yes, you do," I said. So we stopped and talked about that history—as we always do when there are questions and even when there aren't. We walked through his story of his life before he met us. He asked questions and said things that I then clarified for him. We wondered things and asked questions and went back and forth, talking

about his life.

He is proud of his story. I love that he knows it. And I'm grateful that we can talk about it and that I'm sharing this part of his history.

Each of us has a really interesting life history. Realizing that when you're 8 seems a little sad and a little daunting to me as his mother. But I love that when he thinks of his life history, he sees beauty and strength.

~6~



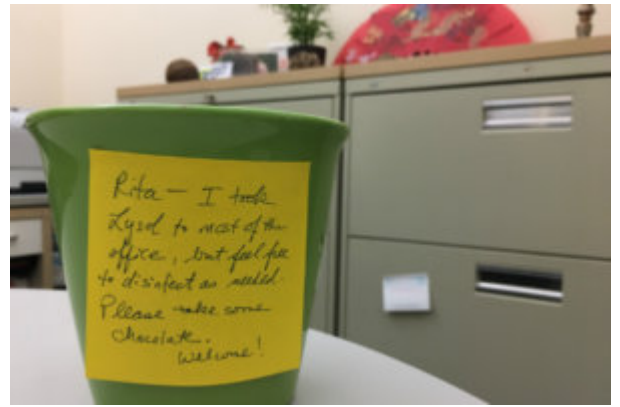
Back when we were engaged to be married, we made a registry of what we needed. But we didn't know what we would need 13 years in as parents of a 10-year-old and an 8-year-old.

We should have registered for more cookie sheets because they're perfect for when the kids are making Lego creations. We should have added more mixing bowls so we could hatch all the dinosaur eggs and pellets of Styrofoam that become farm animals and vehicles. And we should have included more measuring cups because they're ideal for growing crystals.

Mostly, though, I need more counter space for all the fun science projects we do in the kitchen.

~7~

For my job, I work on more than one campus, but I don't have an office both places. Sometimes I am a bit of a nomad. I don't mind because I connect with so many people that way, and I learn quite a bit—which makes everything better.



Sometimes I have writing to do, though, and it can be helpful to be able to duck into a corner—though I can write anywhere, anytime, with almost any amount of noise. So the other day when I mentioned I would be without an office the next day, a friend and colleague said I could use hers. I stopped by and found she had cleaned the whole office and left me a note and two chocolates to enjoy.

I hope someone gives you a chocolate or two today.

***Read more quick takes at Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum, and have a wonderful weekend!***