

Square

He threw the potato across the square. It took a high arc over the thin crowd and hit a boy in the head.

Shit, said the boy and held a red blotch on his brow.

His father turned to reprimand him, hand up, though without real violence. Oh, he answered, when he saw the mark. What's that?

Another man and his daughter pointed to the potato that had ricocheted off the boy. It was clearly a cooked potato—it had split and steam rose from its insides.

It's a tomato, said the boy, peering into the short distance. I mean, potato. He looked to his dad for confirmation.

The man neither confirmed nor denied. Shit, he said. At that, a woman spun about, her face stern then softening when she took in the scene.

Potato? she said.

Somebody threw it, said her husband. I saw it sail through the sky.

The six people looked up. The sky was pale and blue. That hurt, said the boy.

By now a small commotion had begun about the man who threw the potato. An older man was raising his hand at him, with a degree of violence.

What was that for? he asked the thrower.

The thrower's face and hair were red. He looked as if he were sunburnt, or perhaps embarrassed.

It was hot, said the thrower.

What? said the older man. What was hot? He looked at the sky. It was stupid was what it was.

By now the boy and his father, as well as the father with his little girl, had made their way over.

Is this yours? said the father. He held half the potato in his fist. He didn't know it, but he moved it in an arc against the sky. At the end of its arc, he didn't realize he waved it in the thrower's face.

No, said the thrower. It isn't mine.

At this, a woman laughed, her own cheeks red and fair. No it isn't? It isn't yours?