

4-10-2015

A Celebration

Ceridwen Hall

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Recommended Citation

Hall, Ceridwen (2015) "A Celebration," *Booth*: Vol. 7 : Iss. 4 , Article 2.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/booth/vol7/iss4/2>

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A Celebration

Abstract

I would prefer not to risk explaining my life.

The baby wants to crawl across the table

so we pull aside the candles and let her.

She seems to know she's getting away

with something unusual. Her mother offers

a sippy cup, confiscates the last of the forks.

When the old people leave, we rearrange

the furniture and worry for them. I'm not good

at answering their questions. Nothing I say

feels accurate. Better I volunteer to fetch

and carry. Or lean against the back rail

and eavesdrop...

Cover Page Footnote

A Celebration was originally published at *Booth*.



BOOTH



A JOURNAL

April 10, 2015

A Celebration

by Ceridwen Hall

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The baby wants to crawl across the table
so we pull aside the candles and let her.
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with something unusual. Her mother offers
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When the old people leave, we rearrange
the furniture and worry for them. I'm not good
at answering their questions. Nothing I say
feels accurate. Better I volunteer to fetch
and carry. Or lean against the back rail
and eavesdrop. One sister notices how we've split:
the men on the lawn, the women on the porch—
like a Southern drama. She remembers going
to speech therapy—a difficulty with “world.”
Our oldest sister makes her say “Woolworths,”
which is still difficult. Something divides
the sisters who are mothers and the ones
who are not. It's wide and deep. We can see,
but not reach across. We throw things, try
to catch them, but often the wind interferes.
One of the girls screams. Everyone turns,

but no one is hurt. It's confusing—to see
the cousins in matching dresses, sitting together.
Someone takes a photo. Because of the distance,
you can't tell the younger one is sobbing with rage.
Then we load the cars. One sister leaves, another.
We eat leftovers. I drive the last of the guests
to the airport, which means crossing back
over the river, waiting motionless in traffic.

Ceridwen Hall is a third year MFA candidate at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) and serves as assistant poetry editor at the *Ninth Letter*. She has work forthcoming in *Gravel* and *Cold Mountain Review*.