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## A Celebration

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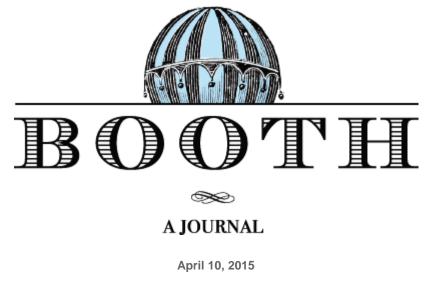
### A Celebration

#### 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*.



# **A Celebration**

by Ceridwen Hall

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. 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*.