



Booth

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Volume 7 | Issue 4

Article 2

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4-10-2015

## A Celebration

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### Recommended Citation

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

Retrieved from: <https://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

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*.