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Laughter Is Warm, But So Is Fire

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Three Poems

Aubrey Roemmich

Laughter Is Warm, But So Is Fire

The house is loud,
a little bit on fire,
but the laughter is warm.

Cards are spewed on the table
along with grudges and forgiveness.

Food, and drink, and the fact that last year the parents
forgot their daughter's birthday are
crammed in the kitchen.

Did she forgive them?

No, not really, but she doesn't bring it up anymore.

One cousin, two cousin, three cousin, four.

Dr. Suess used to be read in this house,
but he long ago vacated these walls...

the walls, the walls, the walls tell all—
the secrets, the lies, the failures.

What makes a house a home?

What makes a group of people family?

Because in the midst of it all they're lonely.

Lonely and longing for something they can't have?

Or maybe they can?

No one is quite sure but they're all adults with mortgages,
they have their lives together.

Delusional and demented they

dance down memory lane reminiscing on the
good, the bad, and the ugly.

There's nothing like a family gathering to bring out the sharks—
sharks, they're all sharks circling for blood
(at least *I* didn't major in art history).

Poke and prod. Pinch and snap.

The house is loud, a little bit on fire, but the laughter is warm.

Despite it all there's love.

Real honest love.

The type of love you don't always find,
but seems to be forged into the familial structure
(I hate this person, but I love them regardless).

Loyalty, joy, and shared experience all mixed together to
create a volatile concoction of...

Love? Happiness? Heartbreak? Loyalty? A never-ending sense of
belonging?

To something, somewhere—
somewhere I have a family.

A family that loves me and I love them.

Isn't that all anyone can ask for?

A house that is loud, a little bit on fire, but filled with warm laughter?