

THE FAMILY ROAST

EMILY BISHOP, 2018

Twas the morning of Christmas
and the family was coming
They arrived in their cars,
their approach was like drumming
Aunts, uncles, and cousins
They arrived by the dozens
As auntie welcomed us, the host with the most
I knew that it was time for the family roast

The first to arrive was dear old grandma
With a cane made of wood from south Alabama
Thirty minutes early, to auntie's delight
Dear grandma spoke out with a voice full of spite
"That turkey looks dry, your bread could be sweeter
You don't cook well enough for my son, he's an eater"
Auntie continued, not batting an eye
but she rolled them real hard when she sugared the pie

Next was my uncle, grandma's oldest son
His voice always loud, like the bang of a gun
He came in, kissed his mama, greeted his sister-in-law
Then his brother came in, munching on a bear claw
They hugged and said hi, then continued outside
He had to give the details of his newest bride
while the younger had been tied down for many a year
The older one never seemed to marry with cheer
This was wife number four, even younger than before
and he reassured that this one was for sure not a whore

Next was my cousin, not quick with her wit
her head was adorned with a hat she had knit
she came in all giggles, happy to be here
And had a smile that was sized from ear to ear
Although she was pretty, she wasn't smart
and some thought of her as the town tart
She did not know of Shakespeare, Tchaikovsky, or Rous
seau But she walked around proudly, with several boys in tow
Her lips, bust, and hips were curvy and full
but her head, I'm sad to say, was all full of wool
Unnoticed behind her arrived her twin
To say they were similar would have been a sin
Fraternal, not identical, they were hardly the same
Only one of them was clearly a dame

The other one small, her nature was bookish
With big eyes and small lips, she resembled a fish
Shy and quiet, unnoticed by most
She was not a fan of personal boast
Near perfect ACT, and 4.0 GPA
Of her accomplishments, she never knew what to say
She would go find a corner and sit by herself
Unmoving and still, like the elf on the shelf

Our third cousin arrived, and he held seniority
For some reason all viewed him with superiority
Lack of rest from studying
was the reason his eyes were scarlet
But I knew he was spending time with Mary Jane,
the harlot
He moved with a lack of speed
Which was a side-effect of weed
He smelled like old musk
And was always out until dusk
despite the fact that he was wild,
Grandma saw him as the golden child

The last to arrive was my sister,
Who had been knocked up by a mister
She no longer had a bright, youthful glow
And found that now she was her greatest foe
she arrived two minutes before dinner began
Followed by her own personal clan
Two boys less than four,
with number three on the way
Her new man was loaded, and starting to gray
He saw in her the Cinderella
he'd looked for since divorce
She said he was kind, and I said of course
and the nephews screamed loud as they ran wild
I realized right then, I would never want a child

We all sat down for dinner, aching with hunger
Looking to one another, from older to younger
We held hands and said grace, thanked God for his might
The sound of cutlery scraping was the bell of the fight
Sister against sister, mother against son
I knew then and there, that the roast had begun.