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Josh Meets the Family

Rose Hoelzle

Western Michigan University

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Josh Meets the Family

Rose Hoelzle

My young Italian cousins
Bundle themselves to his ankles
As he drags them with screaming delight
Across the tan kitchen linoleum.

One on each foot,
One on his back,
Like a human Christmas tree
Adorned with flushed chubby arms
And muddy feet.
He has never looked so beautiful.

Baggy jeans sag on his thin hips
As the kids climb his shoulders,
Sneak the slim wallet from his back pocket,
Shrieking each time he tickles them,
Thwarting their plans.
His upper lip sweats
From the exertions of front yard freeze tag,
He even play Barbies
But gives up when he realizes
He will have to change the clothes.

My aunt said
Meeting the family
Would be good birth control
For my 23-year-old lawyer-to-be.
But he turns to me
With eyes that speak of the future
And I can almost feel
My belly swell.