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XIII Ways of Laughing

Emily W. Recchia
Western Michigan University

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XIII Ways of Laughing

I.

She woke up laughing.
It must have been a funny
dream.

II.

Why didn't Alice
laugh
as she fell down
the rabbit hole?
Surely the
sensation
was more than
curious.

III.

Dogs laugh.
Yeah.

Common knowledge,
right?

Dogs are mammals.
Cows are mammals.

Who would eat
a laughing cow?

IV.

A baby is blowing
spit-bubbles
onto his mother's blouse.

He gurgles
happily,
pleased by the gentle
rocking of his cradle and
soft lullabies.

They slowly rotate

their way into the baby's
pruney ears, and
he giggles an
existential
laugh.

V.
The TV is shoving
unwarranted and unwanted
canned laughter into
bitter faces
unfazed by
Family Guy or Will and Grace.

VI.
Sometimes people
laugh
so as not to
cry.
The tone is tough
and brittle;
their voices weave an
angry welcome mat.

VII.
And sometimes they don't.

VIII.
If Mother laughs
hard enough,
she cries.
If Dad laughs

long enough,
his whole face turns
redredred
just like a
maladaptive chameleon.

IX.
The Swedish boy's
smile
is mischievously complex,
and his laugh is
subtle.
Still, it is laughter
nonetheless and must be
acknowledged as such.

X.
Fictional characters
make the
best
sounds. Take, for
example, Rumpelstiltskin.
He may or may not laugh
in his story, but is there
a soul alive who cannot
hear his malicious voice?
It rings
in every child's head,
along with this fair
warning:
hold your newborns close.

XI.

These markers are
making
a squeaky sound as they
trace their colors
across the whiteness.
The ink
sinks
into crisp paper
deeper
and deeper,
until, finally,
a discreet "LOL" rises
up from the background
and emerges front and center.

XII.

The hardest noise
to contain
is a girlish giggle
at a slumber party.
The more the reprimands,
the louder it gets.
"If I hear one more
peep out of you..."
"Peep."
Insanity ensues.

XIII.

It is a common
misconception
that the throat
exists for
breathing, swallowing, etc.
The truth is,
the throat is a

channel.

The throat—
your throat, my throat,
every throat—
is a channel for
laughter's reverberation
and for the feeling of tickles.
And more than that,
it is a tunnel through which
the oppressed
can speak.

Emily W. Recchia