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XIII Ways of Laughing

Emily W. Recchia

Western Michigan University

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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.

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

XIII Ways of Laughing

Common knowledge,
right?
Dogs are mammals.
Cows are mammals.
Who would eat
a laughing cow?
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