

AMERICAN FAMILY POEMS

Charles Fort

American Family #1

Uncle Speaks at His Supper

There was a holiday dinner
with candlelight and a demon
its steam rising out of its nostrils
claws raking crumbs under the table.
The uncle of his two daughters
spoke of the nigger in his heart
overheard by the host and seated
taught by his parents to play
his hate to half the world.
At night his amputee father
kicks his foot at the world
that left him disabled and thirsty
undressed and begging for a sugar cube
as the voices of family danced in his head.

American Family #2

Uncle Alcoholic in a four-wheel drive
downs the shot glass like a gun
into his mouth as he stumbled
off the deck bathed in khaki urine
after his bloated liver swelled
three times the normal human size.
He slurred *America the Beautiful*
for the low down bigots in his hometown
from New Hampshire to California
and his legacy will be the lyrics
on a money bag and hole in one
to the PhD's at the divine school
who tried to teach him the nuance
and science of the jazz notes he hates to play.
*There is no genius in this music
and porchlight niggers need to work, he said.*
They will hit their sons and daughters
like a bloodhound tracking a killer
raise the child and bruise the child.

American Family #3

No matter what these daughters
 heard from under the window sill
 the conversation from soiled grandparents
 drunk uncles and scarred aunts
 who neither love nor praise
 a child's hand and child's work.
 No matter what the voices in their heads
 spilled from their sour mouths:
Send those jews and homos to hell
kill them off with those disabled retards
who live like kings in the beachtown.
 No matter what these two daughters
 heard they will become the doctors
 who will heal them when they break.

American Family #4

They taught their children well
 to hate one half of the world
 and what they thought was love
 balanced on their hind legs like a mantis

left a blot tempted by their ignorance
 between the sweet and fatal kiss
 and the door to the emberfield
 thrown open against their comfort.

What little they read they believed.
 What the children were taught blossomed
 into ripened nipples and tuxedo wings
 and rows of teeth for the beloved.

They were taught by their elders to hate
 how to play well, play dead, pay back.