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*Clan*

Parade of relatives files through  
the door like coins through a slot.  
Tupperware and Pyrex descend on tables —  
Chex party mix,  
onion dip and chips.

Grandma, balding matriarch,  
skin fragile as tissue paper,  
issues orders from her armchair.  
She stashes insulin and needles  
next to homemade pickles in the refrigerator.

Spinster aunt Mildren rolls in;  
wheelchair gags on shag carpet.  
She gave up cigarettes after her leg  
was amputated twice last year.  
No one buys her slippers for Christmas.

Grandpa shuffles in carrying Mil's fake leg  
upended like an unwrapped gift,  
props it in the corner,  
sits in a chair and naps upright,  
his hearing aid turned off.

Cousins once banished to the station wagon  
for punishment  
now tower like statues  
Mike will graduate Notre Dame;  
Bob, a coke rehab center in Arizona.

Five sisters on a sofa hip to hip  
slip chip to dip to lip.  
I choke on smoke and See's candy  
frozen gray and pick cashews  
out of the party mix.