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# Family Dinner

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## Allison Martin

### Family Dinner

Grandma and Grandpa Jacobson are paying  
for their four children, their spouses  
and eleven grandchildren  
to go on vacation with them.  
Eighteen people—all results of  
their fifty years of marriage.

The first night, we all go  
out to eat. Three tables  
pushed together end to end  
like a long pole.

Aunt Angela whispers her secret  
to Uncle Steve on her left.  
He tells Andy who tells Elise  
who tells Jim who tells Colin  
who is five and doesn't quite  
understand the game of telephone.

So the telephone line is strung clumsily  
from one elementary-aged grandchild  
to the next and around the table to me:  
"There's going to be another grandchild in March!"

I whisper the secret to Aunt Nancy  
who tells her husband Tom.  
He pretends she's the one expecting  
and calls her by her maiden name.

Finally, the secret reaches Grandma.  
She gets excited with the idea  
of the game, letting the importance  
of the secret slip away, and turns

to her left to tell Grandpa about the  
coming member of the family  
as if she was solely responsible for the child  
and has single handedly linked us  
all together with this telephone wire.

Grandpa listens, bent like a wind-beaten tree  
over his plate, and cuts the seafood special  
slowly to keep the knife steady.  
His white head lifts up gradually  
like a mist rising off the water,  
and he leans over to tell Uncle Dave.

### Icarus

It starts with a silly dream—  
Orville and Wilbur found a way to the sky,  
so why shouldn't I if I just wish on the right star?

And while the night stretches on  
I bend over a jar of wax,  
forming and molding it as the moon  
dubiously looks down, wondering  
what fool invention this human is making now.

The moon man, full of doubt, starts  
making jabs at me—barbs to pierce  
the wax wings. He's trying to save me  
from a long fall tomorrow, no parachute  
to float me to the ground. He knows  
the jealousy of the sun. If he can stop  
my dream tonight, shine brighter  
than the stars so I forget all about wishes  
and just go to bed, he can save me.  
He failed to save Icarus.