

1992

The Waiting Room

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Recommended Citation

Brown, Charles N. (1992) "The Waiting Room," *Exile*: Vol. 39 : No. 2 , Article 55.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol39/iss2/55>

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The Waiting Room

A wrenching cry came down from the apartment above me.
A baby's lungs expanded like the wings of a tree,
waking me like the sudden screams in that waiting room.

I could imagine its mother in disarray,
seeking a solution to no problem. In a near-
by chair, the teddy-bear smiled, suggesting

it enjoyed the affects of those volcanic eruptions.
On the wall, mama held dad- undisturbed. Sleep
was in the forefront of my mind, but the pillow couldn't

stop the screams from ringing. Like a breathless beetle
I stared at the ceiling, trying to see through it,
trying to see the baby's pain. The screen above me flirted

with colorful images of baby chicks, fortune cookies, and
eggs, one after the other. Then the waiting room. A right hand
follows a left across the baby's face. The baby now slumbers

in a corner, only with the walls watching, as blood
runs down the baby's feather-like lips. If only
he could run. On the floor, where the fall was broken,

he screams more for his mother who receives his father's
attention by the window, though the baby was still being
tossed from wall-to-wall. I swung my head away

from the ceiling, but the sheets were less helpful than the
pillow. I could still visualize the room. And like
a telephone cord being cut, there was a silence,

just like the waiting room, where eyes pierced my flesh
as I sat scared, opposite those who were there for a reason,
those who now despise me, too, and those who weren't

there at all. I staggered through the many pamphlets
and magazines that no one else read, as if
I were truly interested in *Parenting*.

– Charles N. Brown '93