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Family Therapy IV

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Atkins: Family Therapy IV

FAMILY THERAPY (IV)

Cynthia Atkins

It is the thing we always fail
to mention on all the forms—

the despotic voices dancing off
the charts, and on the trail

of our acrid ancestors, haphazard
and lorn, sniffing us out like cadaver dogs.

Our chromosomes flirting
on the cordless phone—deceases of the heart

and kidney are just the body's bric-a-brac.
Incorporeal or obscene? We are the doctor's worst

unexplained nightmare. And we never speak
of the endocrine glands—unsavory

secretions passed down like the heirloom
nobody even wants. We are a Rogue nation.

No country or comfort zone. Inhospitable bedrooms,
where our parents detonated bombs, blamed

the groping in-laws. Our family trait is to remember
only the good times, like a last blown kiss

at the door—but more like a breath
blown over a bottle, forever haunting

the offspring. Hush, we'll never tell,
yet deep down we know, the mind's pain

is the last inconsolable and extra gene.
Rabid dog in the school yard—

mean and mad and frothing.