

18.

## Laughing Again

Once again, let laughter enter your poem somehow and somehow make it shake.

### The Laughing Child

When she looked down from the kitchen window  
into the back yard and the brown wicker  
baby carriage in which she had tucked me  
three months old to lie out in the fresh air  
of my first January the carriage  
was shaking she said and went on shaking  
and she saw I was lying there laughing  
she told me about it later it was  
something that reassured her in a life  
in which she had lost everyone she loved  
before I was born and she had just begun  
to believe that she might be able to  
keep me as I lay there in the winter  
laughing it was what she was thinking of  
later when she told me that I had been  
a happy child and she must have kept that  
through the gray cloud of all her days and now  
out of the horn of dreams of my own life  
I wake again into the laughing child

W.S. Merwin  
in *Garden Time*

### In the Company of Women

Make me laugh over coffee,  
make it double, make it frothy  
so it seethes in our delight.  
Make my cup overflow  
with your small happiness.  
I want to hoot and snort and cackle and chuckle.  
Let your laughter fill me like a bell.  
Let me listen to your ringing and singing  
as Billie Holiday croons above our heads.  
Sorry, the blues are nowhere to be found.

Not tonight. Not here.  
No makeup. No tears.  
Only contours. Only curves.  
Each sip takes back a pound,  
each dry-roasted swirl takes our soul.  
Can I have a refill, just one more?  
Let the bitterness sink to the bottom of our lives.  
Let us take this joy to go.

January Gill O'Neil  
anthologized in *How to Love the World:  
Poems of Gratitude and Hope*  
edited by James Crews

Laughter is my puppy,  
buoyant and unruly —

bounces about,  
sniffs everything,  
wags his tail.

He reads the world,  
votes yes on all the details,  
goes right up to strangers,  
wiggle wiggle.

When he takes off running,  
I drag along behind,  
all out of breath,  
hardly keeping up.

Laughter is lost today  
but he'll be back  
trotting along, head held high.

Laughter isn't well trained,  
but he loves his tummy rubbed.

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## He Laughed With a Laugh

He laughed with a laugh  
that he wished was his laugh,  
but everyone knew it wasn't.

When he laughed he would ask,  
"Does that sound like my laugh?"  
and everyone said, "It doesn't."

The laugh that he laughed  
that wasn't his laugh went  
"Hardy har har, guffaw!"

The laugh that he laughed  
that he wished wasn't his went,  
"Hruck, snuffle-hick, hee-haw!"

JonArno Lawson  
from *Black Stars in a White Night Sky*  
posted by Major Jackson on  
The Slowdown