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"Backwards Pie Wishes"

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“Backwards Pie Wishes”
Holiday Custom

Informant:
My full name is Katherine Fay Francis, although I usually just go by ‘Katie.’ I am twenty-three years old and am in my fourth and final year in the BFA Acting program at Utah State University where I am also completing a minor in English. I was born in Logan, Utah and have lived here my entire life apart from 18 months from August 2013 to January 2015 during which I served an LDS mission in the Dominican Republic. I am still an active member of the LDS church. My immediate and most of my extended family are also active Mormons. My mother and father are both middle-school level music educators and have been happily married for 28 years. I have one older brother, Michael, who is married to Sherese Nielsen, one younger brother, Daniel, and one younger sister, Claire. My favorite hobbies are playing the piano and violin, and watching documentaries and movies about hauntings.

Context:
This is a custom my mother has instilled in me since before I can remember. However, I am reminded of this special custom now because today is Thanksgiving and we have been eating lots of delicious pies. This experience happened today on Thanksgiving evening. We had eaten our Thanksgiving feast earlier in the day and had spent the rest of the afternoon playing games as a family. We ended the day by coming back to the kitchen to bring out pies and watch a movie. The following exchange happened between me and my mother, Melody Whitelock Francis (49) at our kitchen table as our five other family members - my mom’s husband (my father) Will Francis (51), my older brother Michael (26), his wife Sherese (26), my little brother Daniel (18), and my little sister Claire (13) - were all present at the table eating pie and watching a movie together on the screen we have set up in my mom and dad’s kitchen.

Text:
My mom, Melody, always taught me to triangularly cut foods backwards. This mostly applies to pizza and pie, but especially pie, and especially around the holidays when my mom bakes loads of pies for our family. The incentive to eating your pie backwards, she always says, is that you get to make a wish. I thought this was a regular custom among all families all through my growing up years. But when I reached high school and later college, I began teaching this special custom to all of my friends and significant others.
This particular Thanksgiving night, however, my mom did something special that I don’t think I’ll ever forget. My entire immediate family was all sitting at our busy table in my mother and father’s home in Logan, Utah, all eating pie, laughing, and talking together while watching a movie on a screen my dad had set up in the kitchen. I noticed that my mom was eating her pie backwards and realized that I, in my haste to snarf down my pumpkin pie, had completely forgotten to eat it backwards. My mom left the last bite of her pie on her plate for a solid ten minutes or so, at which point I said, “Mom! I completely forgot!” She responded by saying, as she slid her plate over to me, “Here, take mine! You can have my wish!”

**Texture:**

I record this experience with great feelings of tenderness and affection for my sweet mom. I love this tradition in our family and am surprised that more people don’t do it. I can remember often asking my mom in the past why she believes in this pie wish, and she always kindly brushes off my question by saying that she just doesn’t know and that she has done this for as long as she can remember. The environment of the situation at the time of this particular experience was very bright, raucous, and cheerful, and yet when my mother told me to take her wish, she did so in a very quiet, unassuming manner with twinkling, smiling eyes.

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ENGL 2210: Introduction to Folklore
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