To My Son

Jacqueline Allen Trimble

Do you remember when you were four
and we were on the airplane ascending
as if to heaven, and you freaked out
because you did not want to ascend
at that moment, and I freaked out
afraid too of the swiftness and roar
of engines in which I had no faith,
and when I came to my senses maybe
five seconds later, you refused to let me
hold your hand, angry I had left you
in your time of need?

Transgressions like this one are all
I think of these days,
and of course my stunning absence
the night you lay on your bed
and died. Were you, a full-grown man,
more willing to be lifted into that
unknown expanse? Were you afraid?
Did you reach again for my missing hand
and forgive me
for all the times I failed you?

Jacqueline Allen Trimble is a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellow (Poetry), a Cave Canem Fellow, and an Alabama State Council on the Arts Literary Fellow. Her poetry has appeared in *Poetry Magazine, The Louisville Review, The Offing,* and *Poet Lore* and has been featured by *Poem of the Day, Poem-a Day,* and *Poetry Daily.* Published by NewSouth Books, *American Happiness,* her debut collection, won the 2016 Balcones Poetry Prize. *How to Survive the Apocalypse,* was named one of the ten best poetry books of 2022 by the New York Public Library. Trimble is Professor of English and chairs the Department of Languages and Literatures at Alabama State University.

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