

Startled Awake

SJ Larson

He calls out to me in the darkness
He has learned to sleep on his own
But still finds himself restless and yearning
For my mother arms
And my mother warmth

I send in his father first
To comfort and calm him.
And it may work for a while,
But it never lasts.
He still calls for me
Aching to be close to my side.

I call out in my darkness too.
I have learned to find peace on my own
But still find myself restless and yearning
For my Mother's arms
And my Mother's warmth.

They send in the Father
to comfort and calm me
And it works for a while,
But it never lasts.
I still call for my Mother
Aching to be close to Her side.

I wonder if She aches too
hearing my cries and feeling
Unable to reach me
Yet, also
Unable to hold Herself back

I run to my baby and hold him close
Drying his tears
And speaking soft words
Until he finally relaxes in my arms

I feel my Mother God as She runs to me
A straightening of the spine,
A gentle warmth
And strength that
Only a mother can give.

They tell me I should not pray to Her,
But in quiet moments we have
Desperate conversations.
She speaks comfort to me
The way I speak to my son.

“Breathe baby, breathe
I never truly left you
I’m right here,
I will always be right here.”

SJ LARSON {sjlarsonwrites@gmail.com} is a small-town poet whose work often delves into the intersection of mental illness, faith practices, and motherhood. Alongside her poetry, she works as a professional genealogist, speaks fluent Swedish, and enjoys reading, painting, and sipping on Dr. Pepper.