

## **“God Help Us”**

by Jason Arment

When I joined the service I reckoned  
killing was a thing for my youth  
after that it was all gravy & maybe  
even more than that with a wife & kid  
& whatever else would happen in the Jetson  
like future without black people being  
slaughtered by the police or Mexicans  
called rapists & lazy or whatever else  
people had to tell themselves to sleep  
at night; I just never understood  
why have a voice if you can't say  
what you want & why have a heart  
full of fire if you can't find the right  
hill to die on

Most folk never even had salad days  
though they are a thing of tears & blood  
& all the stuff you never wanted  
to unpack in an airport or at the behest  
of anyone, much less an authority figure  
like a parent or teacher or cop  
& god help you if you're black  
or disabled, or out of your neighborhood  
or mind, & God help us if we ever get to the point  
of event horizon & decide to shoot back