

Forces

Volume 1993

Article 10

5-1-1993

Afraid

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Recommended Citation

Jackson, Ron (1993) "Afraid," *Forces*: Vol. 1993 , Article 10.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces/vol1993/iss1/10>

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Every woman who has reared a little boy can relate to this poem. I'm not sure that little girls are afflicted with the same fears as boys, but I know, from my own experience and that of my own two sons, that boys usually call to "Mom" when they're afraid. I think that certain maternal bond must last from the womb to the grave. I wrote the following to my mother, as a Christmas present, to assure her of her never ending importance in my life.

A small boy lies in bed at night
With darkness all around,
And strains his eyes to see the shape
Of whatever made the sound
That woke him up, from restful sleep,
And filled his heart with fear
His breaths come short, his eyes are wide,
And in them stands a tear.

His quivering lips are covered now
By the sheet pulled over his head,
And they form a word that he can use
In any time of dread
"Mother" comes the magic sound,
"Mother, I'm afraid".....
And then he hears her voice so sweet
In the darkness where he's laid....
"Go back to sleep, my little man,
There's nothing you should fear.
I'm right here close beside you now
No bad things can come near."

The tear is gone, his eyes are closed,
A soft hand strokes his arm
He drifts into the land of dreams
And knows he'll face no harm.

As minutes quickly turn to hours
And days turn into years,
A small, frail child becomes a man
And casts away all fears.
But sometimes, many miles away,
In darkness where he's laid
He quietly whispers, through the sheet,
"Mother, I'm afraid."