

Flying Home from Chicago (after attending a taping of the Oprah Show)

By Sharron Scott

I am talking to my friend Tammy:

 “ I think I will go back to school to get a Master’s degree, I don’t know...”

The plane drops-two seconds grapple with eternity

My diet coke can tilts and spills

Middle-aged women stop their laughter and chatter

I let out a short yelp

I say a one-word prayer: “Jesus”

But it is too late

He has already caught us, and we are flying smoothly again

The older women resume their cackling

I am agitated that the 17 year old behind me

Is still sleeping; he has slept through the whole two second ordeal

Tammy tires to resume the conversation that started 15 seconds ago

But I can’t hear her over my shaking knees

1. What is the setting?
2. What is this poem about? Who is the narrator? How old is she? What can you infer about her after reading the poem?
3. In line three, what does “two seconds grapple with eternity” mean?
4. Why is the narrator’s prayer too late?
5. How do the narrator, Tammy, the middle-aged women, and the 17 year old respond to the plane “dropping”
6. Have you ever experienced a turbulent flight? Explain.
7. Write a poem about an experience that happened over a short period of time (less than an hour.) For example you may choose to write about: a moment during your first day of high school, a moment during a sporting event, a moment that happened while hanging out with your friends at the mall.