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Rocamadour

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Rocamadour

Cassandra Fleming

We stand on cliffs that kiss the sky
and peer over the edge to a village
in miniature, lilting streets
of cobblestone, blueberry
bushes, a family of
stray cats curled
on a dark roof.

A little boy, cheeks painted with
play, tilts precariously towards
the edge beside me until
his mother stills his
laughter with her
two hands.

In a breath, she swings him over the edge,
holding him only by the collar of
his raincoat. His spine curls
against the cold. His feet
kick, swimming
in the air.

My mother's hand finds my shoulder
before I can scream, her fingers
caught in the hollow of
my collarbone as we
watch her pull
the boy back.

Our shock fades into the mountain air.
He promises to behave. Below us:
lilting streets, blueberry bushes
a family of stray cats,
and a single yellow
rain boot.