AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL
ZION CHURCH
COLUMBUS AVENUE, ROXBURY, MASSACHUSETTS
POETRY

James Washington, Jr.

With my mother,
the faith leaper,
as a boy.

The Word of God, thank you Father,
Sunday spectacle. The minister's face
cracked open into blessed sweat.
He bellowed. He wiped with a white
salty hanky and wore a black sail
of robe with a purple sash.
He billowed at each Amen.
Across the pews,
hands waved, fingers
stretched high in a trance
to His vision.
Some fell out into the aisles,
gone rigid.
Some waved cardboard
fans to revive the fallen.
Others stomped their feet
trying to shake off
an immoral cramp.
All of us black folks,
hands up, trying
so hard to be saved.
We thought it was possible.

In late adulthood,
America, obese
on white power,
still laughs.