

ANDREW BENNETT

Take Off

For safety and security purposes,
please bring your line to a full stop,
return the pad to your carry-on, and place
fully under the seat in front of you.
Once we've reached cruising altitude,
you will be permitted to continue your
poem. For a list of approved metaphors,
please refer to page thirty-six of your in-flight
magazine. Your title — *Sitting at the Café*
in Playa del Carmen — is too long for this
aircraft and confuses air traffic control.
Starting in the second person has made
the captain think you're talking to him,
and your first sentence — *You were skeptical*
of the Mayan hot chocolate, but what did you say
when I grew a second penis? — is bothering
the mother with two daughters beside you.
We ask that you firmly tighten the form, as
we no longer offer free verse on this airline.
At this time switch off all electronic devices,
including your subconscious — don't process
in your head what you've already written;
just focus on a simple image, the tractor
whose engine sounded anxious
going in reverse, the cress-covered
stream beyond the spring house that to you,
four years old, was a river.

ANDREW BENNETT grew up outside Philadelphia, and lives in Boston with his wife and two daughters. He has taught high school English for twelve years in New York, New Mexico, and Massachusetts. Other poems of his appear in *Versé Wisconsin*, *The Hollins Critic*, and *Rattle*. He studied at Vassar College, Bread Loaf School of English, and Rainier Writers Workshop.

