

Another Poem About Flying

I was reading Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*
and in part five, chapter three, she talks briefly about Boreas,
Nordic wind-made god of winter.

I can almost see him, wrapping his ethereal self around the torso of this airplane.
Without him we might have crashed.
Without him we might have flown.

I have been traveling since three in the morning.
Boreas met me at Terminal G.

I wish this was a round trip.

In two days I will be sleeping in a bed in
Providence and all its nothing-but-pretty
Fixed between the open sea and the open sky.
The summers here are nice.

I know this town like the back of my hand
and I know the back of my hand well.
I have scars on my knuckles from when I tore my skin on a punching bag.
There's a freckle just before my fourth finger on my right hand and it bothers me.
There's no matching mark on my left.

The night sky looks like paper through the window.
The stars are nothing more than clouded pinpricks against a blue haze.
They look as far away as they've ever been.

I know the names of all the winds
and almost all the stars.

Leaving home for the first time felt like a dismembering.
Every day little by little I was torn apart.
When I arrived overseas
there was nothing left.

I drew blueprints on the hollowest parts of my skin.
I built myself back up out of what I'd never done before,
drinking hot wine that tasted like cranberries,
riding roller coasters banned in the States,
asking out a girl with a nose piercing.

I didn't think she would say yes.

I used to be afraid of airplanes.

There's a gentleness to the air outside
(cold enough to frost the plane's wings)
making me feel as if I could fall asleep.

I'll pop a pill, I guess, let it knock me out.
It's hard to fall asleep of my own accord
over the buzzing of the plane's engines.

The sedative, however,
over-the-counter motion sickness medicine
that works like chloroform, does what it has to.

I don't know if I'll drift off quickly or slowly.
I don't know if I'll dream about the wind.
Most likely I'll dream about nothing.