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## Art

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*Art by Alison O'meara*

## ROUNDTrip

Two hours from home  
on my midnight flight to Dallas.  
Everyone is asleep, dreaming of jet  
engines,  
and migratory things.

Her head is on my shoulder  
and I look out past the wing.  
One hundred miles to our starboard  
side I see the peaceful  
fury of an electrical storm  
below me.  
The thunderhead nebula  
is just a piece of history.  
By the time the light radiates into me  
I'm already looking into the past.

The raging hot anger of  
an ion-charged aerial  
war doesn't crackle with white hot intensity —  
it sings a distant jazz song.  
A saxophone riff of light  
that's over before I even see it.  
It's a Charlie Parker song in  
a smoky jazz club.

It's a vision that I can't  
quite see completely  
unless my ears drink in the  
music my brain is stirring.

Beauty on the rocks.  
Awakened not stirred.

The lightning storm,  
so far away,  
is slipping past my window frame.  
Gone.

The weather pattern and the flight path  
like adolescent children at a junior high dance —  
the eye contact fleeting and ravaging your bravery.  
You feel alone and small so you put your  
hands in your pockets and walk away.

There's a grandeur to the world  
when seen from a different  
view,  
and in my coach seat on row  
17 the world seems bigger  
than I remembered.

I start to wonder about  
my future,  
where I'll go and who I'll be –  
I want to be the kindness of  
lingering showers following  
summer droughts.  
I want to be a quenching  
refreshment falling  
on your head.

In this world change must  
come.  
Furious, agonizing, revolutionary, cyclonic  
change.  
Until those who hate have been  
sucked out of their storm cellars and into the  
open. The wind will rip their  
coats off their backs and  
blow their sickness off of them  
and out to sea.

Change doesn't follow its  
flight pattern.  
Change takes a right hand  
turn and plummets forward  
into the lightning storm.

And my plane might crash.  
But who cares?  
Sacrifice is a virtue I need to learn.  
Forgiveness is my calculus –  
hard to study,  
difficult to memorize,  
impossible to master.

Jazz gives way to rock n' roll.  
The world erupts in cataclysmic  
thoughts.  
Thoughts genetically evolve into  
the species of action,  
and action welcomes change.

The intercom dings.  
The pilot prepares his final  
descent.  
The storm is hundreds of miles into the past.  
The jetliner groans and  
complains to gravity.  
The passengers awake and  
reposition their luggage.  
We press down hard  
onto the runway.

Back on the ground.  
Back at home.  
Back beneath the sky,  
no longer above it.  
Back in my world where  
growth is just a theory.  
Back at my house where  
communication is a burden.  
Back in my bed where  
thoughts go unrestricted.

Time for change.  
For jazz to reinvent.  
For life to move.  
For God to protect.

There's rain on the runway  
and I'm soaking wet.  
Change is possible  
when thought has value.  
When a storm sings choral  
odes miles away,  
then light will come if only  
in small, appetizing doses.

So, wake up, Carter.  
Help us reinvent.

*Carter Hudson*