

PACKING

there are too many times
when i've said this before

never thought i'd really leave you
and now i sit here

in this apartment
popcorn bowl on the cocktail table

eleven thirty at night
the television playing static

it looks too clean in here,
not lived in

so i decide to take a trip
get out of this place

into the bedroom, time to start
packing: two dresses, two

pairs of shorts, shirts, loneliness,
anger, make-up, extra socks

it's amazing how much of your life
you can fit in a single suitcase



Kuypers writing from the October 22 2003 performance art show for The Other Side



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You can't be free or strong until you can speak up



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SOME PEOPLE WANT TO BELIEVE

so we were sitting there at denny's in some suburb of detroit, i don't know which suburb it was, but we were there at like ten in the morning eastern standard time, i was grabbing a bite to eat before i crossed the ambassador bridge and travelled into canada. you know, i really only associate places like denny's with travelling now, i always stop at some place like denny's only when taking a road trip and just stopping for some food. i think if i went into a denny's and i wasn't travelling, i'd get really confused. well, anyway, like i said, we were at denny's, and it was morning, so the both of us got breakfast. being a vegetarian, i ordered eggs with hash browns and toast, right? and the waitress says to me, like they always do in some no-name town in the middle of america, "yuh don't want any MEAT?", like it's so unheard of to not eat meat at breakfast. so i say, no, no meat, thank you, and then my friend orders pretty much the same thing, and we sit for a while, and talk and stuff, and then the food comes. so then she asks me, "you're a

vegetarian, right?" and i say, yes, and then she goes, "but you're eating chicken." and i'm just like, well, no, i'm not, an egg is an animal by-product, not animal flesh, and i was about to say that that was the difference between being a vegetarian and being a vegan, and she says, "but if a chicken sat on it long enough, it would become a chicken." and i'm just like, well, no, it's an unfertilized egg, there was never a rooster around that hen, so it could never become a chicken. and she's like, well, it's a chicken, though, and she just couldn't think that this wasn't a chicken. and i'm just thinking, my god, does she really think that a chicken can lay eggs without them being fertilized? like only worms and stuff can procreate without two sexes present. so our voices start getting a little louder, and then it ends up where i'm saying "so are you having an abortion every time you have a menstrual cycle? are men who have wet dreams mass murderers?" and she's looking away and saying "i'm not listening to you -"

and then i realized that some people, with logic thrown in their face, will still believe what they want to believe.

ON AN AIRPLANE WITH A FREQUENT FLYER

"I was once on a flight to Hawaii and I was waiting in line for the lavatory. There was always a line for a flight this long, you know, it seemed the washrooms were always on demand on a flight this long. So I finally got into the washroom, you know, and I looked into the toilet, and someone, well, lost the battle against a very healthy digestive system and left the "spoils" in the toilet, stuck. Maybe it didn't want to go down into the sewage tank where all the other waste from this long trip went to. Can you imagine all the stuff this airplane had to carry across the ocean? Well, anyway, so I saw this stuck in the toilet, and I went to the washroom, and when I was done i flushed and it still wouldn't budge, and so I opened the door and walked out into the aisle of the plane again. And there was this long line of people waiting to use this cramped little washroom, and I just wanted to tell them all, 'you know, I didn't do that.' And then it occurred to me that everyone, when they leave the bathroom on that plane, will think the exact same thing."



DONE THIS BEFORE

I keep looking back at your picture. I'll flip it over to stop from staring at it while I read a page from my book, but a minute won't pass before I'll have to turn the photo over again to see your face. It's as if I can't get away from it.

My flight was delayed, I'm at O'Hare Airport, the airport that departs three planes every second, or is it one plane every three seconds, oh shit, I don't remember. I have to wait at least three hours for my next flight, hey, if so many planes take off here, then why can't I get on one of them? Oh well, so I decided to waste my time in one of the airport cocktail bars, by gate L 4. I thought I'd start with a white zinfandel and work my way to mixed drinks, but this wine tastes so good that I think I might just have to have another. I'm so exasperated, I hate to wait, and all I have is a good book to keep me company. I used your photo from my wallet as a bookmark. I need these things to keep me sane.

It really isn't bad here in the cocktail bar by gate L 4, the chairs aren't that uncomfortable, even though they're a pretty ugly shade of green that doesn't match anything in the room. It really isn't that bad, in a foreign city, in a foreign airport. Not when I've got my Sutter Home White Zinfandel. And my picture of you.

You know, there's a blonde girl dressed well with a bad perm across the bar, and she's smoking a cigarette. I know I don't smoke, but I'm almost tempted to ask her for one just so I can hold the cigarette the way you do. I'd like to taste the tar, the nicotine, the way I taste it in your kiss. You think I don't like it, but I do.

They're playing a song in the cocktail bar, a song that reminds me of an ex. I wanted to marry that man. He had a knack of being able to envelope me, to take my troubles away. I don't know if I can take away my troubles myself anymore. I don't know if the liquor's helping, or the cigarettes. Your photo helps, my little bookmark. At least for now it helps.

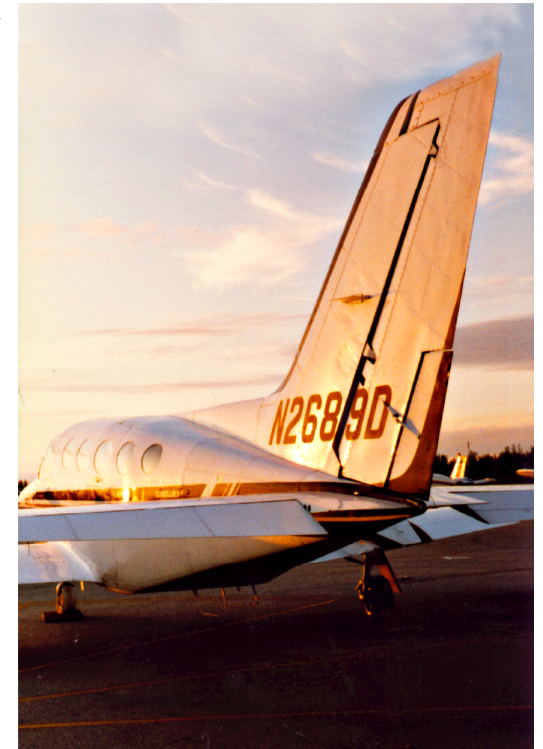
Sitting in this L 4 cocktail bar reminds me of my brother. When I was young he'd always pick us up at the airport, but if he wasn't waiting at the gate we knew to look for him at the seafood cocktail bar. A part of me expects him to come walking through the doorway now, flannel shirt, ski jacket, wind-blown greasy hair, coke-bottle glasses. You know, when I'd look at his eyes through those glasses, his eyes looked twice as big as they actually were. I could imagine him now, I could imagine the smell of his Levi's of dirt from the construction site. I remember that smell from my father; I'd smell it every day when he came home from work. It's my brother's business now, he's got his own family now to worry about instead of a little sister. So I'll just sit here at this airport cocktail bar, remembering the days when I'd sit with him in a place like this and I was too young to drink.

God, I want to see my brother walking in to this bar at L 4, ordering a shrimp cocktail. I want to see you, babbling on about a movie you reviewed or a gig your band had. I want something that isn't so foreign, like this bar. Or maybe I want something that isn't so familiar.

I took your picture out of my wallet, the wallet that has so many pictures of men who have come and gone in my life, men who have hurt me, men who I have gone through like... like dish washing liquid, or like something I use all the time and replace all the time and don't think twice about.

I'll just sit here, in this airport, trying to care just the right amount, not too much, but not too little.

So I'll just sit here, in this airport cocktail bar, looking at your photo, and wondering if I've done this before.



STATUE

i think of statues of greek gods
they were what people could aspire to be
they were something to strive for

and i've had no inspiration
other than my own mind
and i've created my own images
to keep me going

and i've succeeded
i've done it all
i've got the fame, the fortune

and now i look around
and all i see is destruction
i see the ruins of a fallen age

and i just want to see that statue
it's so vivid in my mind
and i know it has to be out there somewhere

but i've been working so hard so long
that i forgot about the light at the end of the tunnel
and now i don't know where to look



SOMETIMES THE LIGHT

Sometime the understanding
Travels into the realms of the unknown
All we can do is hope

search
dream

Because we will never find.
Sometimes the light is not enough.

