

Proof

How can I not think
of you as I buckle myself
on a plane, the useless seatbelt
clicking in my palms? You,
always searching for whiskers
in the bathroom mirror,
wearing only bleached cotton
t-shirts and blue blue
jeans, hair cropped above
sunburned ears, fingernails
as clean and white
as the edges of a photograph.
I can't turn off
the thought of you staring
at these rigid seats,
domes of hair lined
before you, the air
beating against
scratched plexiglass
the plane a dying insect
struggling to rise.
You are proof
that sometimes the wind
slaps 256 lives
against the hard earth,
that a man
not yet twenty-three
can die again and again
on the evening news
only to be reborn
in that moment when the sky
accepts us,
when the earth
lets go and waits
for our return.