

You Should Change at Jamaica

by Carl Santoro

I wake
and immediately
feel more vulnerable.
The metallic voice overhead
announcing a stop
I had hoped to avoid.

Eyes across from me
staring at my bare knees.
The train pushing through
gravity in its merciless
forward momentum.

Now what?

Wiping my drool away
seemes perfectly okay
in this situation.
Eat, Pray, Love had fallen
between my heels.
My laptop
needs closing.

Time to
gather, compose, leave.

Someone left a tin
of Altoids on the
seat next to me.

I throw it in my purse.

We all rise for
the venture beyond
the threshold of
the sliding doors.

Like drops in a huge
splash, I and the others
disperse onto
the concrete platform.
An island of respite.
A place to gather our thoughts
as the steel snakes
ooze by us, determined to
feed on other
holders of tickets.

My phone is dead.
It is getting dark.
Time for Altoids I guess.

The hinged container feels
a little strange. Different.
I shake it.
No rattling of pebbles of
menthol can be heard.
Instead, feels more
like only a single, solid object
banging around inside.

I open it slowly. Cautiously.
Inside is a black thumb drive
resting on a bed of
folded paper toweling.

A white label adheres to
the whole length of it.
On it, small, hand-written words
intrigue and begin to scare me:

"Insert and be changed forever.
Otherwise leave for someone else."

I reach for my laptop.

I wake
and immediately
feel more vulnerable.
The metallic voice overhead
announcing a stop
I had hoped to avoid.

