

# Eight States Away

*by* Foster Trecost

He boarded the wrong plane. His mistake might have been discovered had the seat belonged to someone else, but the plane was nearly empty and he fell asleep before it took off. He slept through the beverage service, he slept through the light snack. In fact, he slept until awoken by a flight attendant who only said the plane had landed, failing to mention *where* it had landed.

He walked through an airport never seen before, which gave no clue he was eight states away from where he was supposed to be. His carry-on did away with the need to wait while the claim carousel spun luggage. He left through the nearest exit.

It was warmer than he expected, but his next chance of discovery came at the cabstand. He climbed into a taxi and asked for Hotel Savigny. The driver nodded and pulled away, neither of them knowing nine cities across the country contained a Hotel Savigny, including the one he was in, as well as the one where he was supposed to be.

He paid the driver and entered the hotel, which seemed nicer than the one he booked, but not nice enough to cause concern. He approached the receptionist and she greeted him warmly: "Do you have a reservation?" she asked.

"Of course," he answered, and gave his name.

When the receptionist could not find his name, she simply said the reservation seemed to have been misplaced, but not to worry because plenty of rooms were available, and she gave him a key.

In his room, he called his wife to let her know he had arrived, that the trip passed without incident, that he was resting and would eat dinner soon and sleep soon after that.

"You forgot your toothbrush," she said. "Absentminded as ever."

He shook his head.

"What's it like?" she asked.

"Just a city, like all the others."

He stretched across the mattress and thought about when he had wandered away from his mother in the grocery store. She found him finally, but he never knew he had been lost. It puzzled him why such a memory would present itself. He called the front desk and asked for a newspaper.

