

How to Travel with Your Demons (2)

by Lillian Ann Slugocki

So maybe it's the suitcase by the door. Handle already extended. The keys are in the lock, dangling. Apparently, this is a woman who leaves nothing to chance. Her French nylon handbag is on the kitchen table, zipped open, its contents completely exposed; red leather wallet, tobacco, pennies, two pens, hair brush, hair spray, notebook. A silver make-up bag, also completely unzipped; two shades of lipstick, one mascara, one lip pencil, a set of keys, eyeshadow, lip liner, quarters, and one bottle of ativan. She's been on this drug for six years. Traveling without it would be disastrous.

She both trusts and distrusts her car service. In her experience, they are 85% reliable. The odds are in her favor, but she's not dealing with abstractions today. Not at all. She stands in front of the living room window, the white sheers still tied back, and calls them:

Hi, I have a car scheduled for 5:30 p.m.

Miss, it's barely twelve in the afternoon.

If her suitcase were unpacked, we would find socks, sports bra, two cotton long sleeved shirts, one dark blue with tiny red dots, and one light blue, black and navy straight legged jeans, a pair of black leather shoes, and Anna Karenina, purchased in 1983. In the far corner of the suitcase, a small red travel bag with shampoo, a silver pair of hoops, a garnet ring, a broken turquoise necklace, a talisman so old she forgot when she started traveling with it, and finally a chunk of slate from the narrow West Village home of Edna St. Vincent Millay. But also aspirin, cranberry pills, antibiotics, and two more shades of lipstick.

In the year 2013, nobody calls each other anymore. There are multiple felicitations from social platforms. The love of hundreds of people, seemingly, rain down from the sky, but its not like when the cock hits the good spot inside you. And everybody who is reading

this knows this is true. We all know what that feels like, that aha moment, that eiphany, like, Christ, it's home. You feel it deep in the heart of you. In the core of your sacred and profane being. But the digital counterpart is just another abstraction. Its not the visceral cock hitting the G spot. It's not a human voice.

And how funny our relationship to time in these moments. When we are waiting, waiting, waiting, when time can't move fast enough, when time can't slow down enough. She looks at the clock. She's managed to waste an hour. She could go for a walk, but its snowing out, and that means re-doing her hair. And through this use of reasoning she talks herself out of doing anything. She sits at the window, like a woman in a Hopper painting, a smudge of color, a dot of humanity, peering through the glass, waiting for the minutes to tick by, dreading the passage of time. The snow continues to fall.

