

How to travel with your Demons (5)

by Lillian Ann Slugocki

The snow that fell in Brooklyn is now falling in Chicago. The plane has been circling O'Hare for twenty minutes. It falls in sheets past her window. The turbulence is unsettling. The pilot announces they are going to try to land in Milwaukee. The runways are in bad shape here. Maybe it isn't the same storm from Brooklyn after all, but a new system that's moved in from Rockies. Weather is serious business around Lake Michigan. Someone's shaking powdered sugar on the wings of the plane, across the geometry of her face. Its getting colder and colder. What the hell is she supposed to do in Milwaukee? The brother that's waiting in Chicago will not be the brother who will turn around and drive to another city in a snowstorm. Panic rises then falls as the plane begins a steep ascent over Lake Michigan before it banks to the right, and heads north.

The seatbelt signs are on, like a constellation over everyone's head. The pole star, Ursa Major. It is a sleek piece of machinery cutting through the night sky and the winter storm. Just skirting the edges of a crescent moon. Almost ready to crash into the Pleides. Or Orion. Barely visible from the cloud cover. Which extends two hundred miles north and south. But still nothing can be stopped in its trajectory. Not this plane, not even the woman sitting in Aisle H, seat 589. She believes that this started with a phone call when she walked out of the deli yesterday. She believes that it started when it was snowing this morning in Brooklyn, waiting for her car to arrive, but the truth is, this journey began a long time ago.

And while most of us assume the crash position as we are told, double check our seat belts, put our belongings in the overhead bins, these precautions can turn out to be academic. There simply are no guarantees. Better to let go and fall into it. Understand that the real axiom of the universe is flux. Call if God if you will. Or

don't. It hardly matters. The world couldn't care less about our labels, only that we understand this fundamental truth.

