

# In December, 1998, we dropped more bombs on Iraq

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This is between the two wars, so  
it surprises you  
when TV screens light up with this in the hotel breakfast room.  
You are in Delhi, you were supposed to fly home  
last night but  
fog canceled everything.  
So the airport will be jammed today.  
And in that terminal,  
your skin feels different on you,  
as if suddenly bright on you,  
you feel like you should hide it, men  
and families wait to board  
their Air India, Air Arabia, Royal  
Jordanian, Emirates, Qatar Airways flights.  
It is clear outside.  
Mostly.  
On board, you watch out the porthole  
as, bit by bit, air thickens,  
minute by hour, the pilot breaks in  
now and then to say he is still waiting  
for clearance and explains some things about this  
and about that, but you  
are looking out the window, your right thumb tapping  
on your blue jeans. Every one breathes  
out when the plane finally inches,  
then rolls and rolls and rises into the dark.

Connections, of course, snarl, the airline has bought every room left in a Hong Kong hotel because none of you are leaving tonight and, well, there aren't enough rooms, so we are going to need some of you to share your room, okay?

You nod to the man  
you've never met.  
His skin, his language,  
is foreign to you. You  
assume your governments,  
if they are speaking,  
are not speaking kindly  
in their translations. You  
both  
sleep like stones in a river.  
He is gone before your alarm beeps.  
You rise, dress,  
keep on your way.

