

# Praying in bed

*by* Steven Pirani

When I was a kid, I was terrified of dying in a bombing,  
which is strange, really, because I lived in Long Island,  
which has relatively few bombings to speak of.

The thing was, we lived by JFK,  
and the planes would fly low over the house.

I used to see, in my mind,  
fat ACME-brand bombshells  
birthing from each roar overhead.

Each, with big red labels:  
"BOMB"  
"YOU'RE DEAD"  
"EXPLOSIVE"

The louder the planes were, I thought,  
the worse it would be for me.

Because of this, I used to pray, a lot,  
tossing out "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys" like kosher salt, like  
olive oil.  
And at the end, I'd always ask the big man:

"Keep the bombs from killing us, and the asteroids from hitting the  
Earth."

Ah, yes, the asteroids.  
Essentially bombs,  
just from space.

I don't do this anymore,

I stopped when I was ten or eleven,  
and I know better now:

A bomber, you'd never hear it,  
and an asteroid?  
You may as well shrug your shoulders.

I haven't done the whole praying thing in a long time,  
but I still remember the whole script,

and sometimes, I feel a lot like my nine-year-old self,  
and I sit up in bed,  
and I wonder if it worked.

