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Aircraft and Field Study / Search Field

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Laura-Gray Street

Aircraft

The Boeing 737 brims with the hum of its workings, fills
each of us with that hum, as the aircraft is also filled

with our functions—transpirations, contagions, discourse,
excretions, breath, sweat, heart and blood rhythms—all of it

mixing with the currents that surround us and shape our
flight path, like the bump we just went over, which the pilot

explains is backwash from another plane en route before us,
wind curling out in vortices that we intersected like a boat

crossing the wake of another boat. It felt like going over
a pothole in the road. For a moment I forgot we were flying,

thought we traversed hard ground, textured surface beneath
us instead of rippling atmosphere. That jolt still vibrates

through the cabin, through all of us. We are altogether
wadded, quilted, packed in as batting. There is no emptiness.

There is only the thick flow of interweaving processes, fluff
and lint, saturated and congealed, turgid and enriched. Nothing

that isn't touched by something and so by everything. A bottle
of water I bought at the airport newsstand trickles through

me in swallows, urges me to leave my seat for the lavatory.

Others shift their bodies to accommodate me. Recirculated

air swirls and eddies as I make my way down the aisle, then

back to my seat, causing one man to look up from composing

something with GarageBand on his iPad, to suspend the notes

in his headphones that I can't see; interrupting the crossword

puzzle the woman beside me is working, causing her to think

conjoining words. And now the flight attendant approaches

with earnest concern, repeating "Water?" "Water?" "Water?"

"Water?" She offers a tray of clear plastic cups to each seat-

row of earthbound fabric as the plane begins its descent,
returning us to a thirsty, threadbare continent where too

many live as if unaffected by what rips the fabric apart.

Field Study / Search Field

maybe in the first fluff-pocked scrub trees
precursor tufts prickled with coarse hairs

littered through with intractable seeds we'd
find words for the matter at hand the fabric

afoot come to raw fiber washed clean beaten
on a mat combed into strands to twist into

thread fine as sunlight she rubbed spider
webs on her arms and hands never tired

of weaving bolts of the commonplace to
lay over the faces of the dead simple as

rain and wind present as haptic worlds
flitting at the twig ends of our neurons

before we turn merchant and mill so you'd
like to think they who led these vegetable

lambs to the yarn's yawning orifice who
find spandex an intimate tissue between

arbor and ardor would that there were so
many words for the same blank screen

used to pay tribute and taxes on skinny
seedling stock too much rain the days

infected with root rot unproductive small
cup cotton bra full coverage pesticide news

in Chihuahua Tom Cotton says something
dumb sign up at Cotton Top this Sunday

to give a rescue pet a home in the fabric

of our lives incorporated cotton dust

and field-dried bract extract in rat lungs

nearby in the same cotton field were found

the bodies of five more tiny brown

flecks in the fabric are natural leaf stem

and seed remnants not Jennifer Lopez

600 thread count sheets but GMO plants

in the refuge where Bt-sensitive worms

mate with impervious worms to water

down resistance traits victims in this case

were young underprivileged women

workers students the future of sustainable

agriculture smells earthy musty abducted

upland plants produce creamy buds that

bloom in a day or two by morning flowers

turn a pinkish hue that indicates pollination

proof has been accepted that they suffered

physical ill-treatment likely sexual abuse

before shedding petals within a week bolls

set as they say in the field yellow-white red

then dead eight pink crosses in the field

in the case of *Cotton Field* the findings we

have determined smallholder farms this

season latest estimates suggest the pattern

and profusion of cellulose growth until a boll

opens fiber is a living cell meanwhile inside

dark confines the factory is manufacturing