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After the Weather

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AFTER THE WEATHER

Yesterday a man was sucked out of an airplane over the blue tipped mountains of Bolivia. He didn't cry "emergency." He didn't buzz the stewardess. He just dropped his fork, opened his mouth, and let the wind gather him inch by inch.

The other passengers agreed. This was real life, better than the movie or chicken salad. They leaned out of their seats, envying the man, arms and legs spread like a sheet, discovering raw air and the breath of migrating angels.

Below, an old peasant woman beat her tortilla. She never dreamed that above her a man was losing his heart. Perhaps she was a barren woman and, when he landed, she'd say, "Yes, this is my son, a little old and a little late, but still my son."

And the man, he thought of wind and flocks of severed wings, then closed his eyes and arched himself again. He didn't understand. His head began to ache. He understood Buicks, red hair, the smell of day old beer. But not these clouds, this new, white sunlight, or the fate of a man from Sandusky, Ohio.