

Man Jet

I packed as many curved shapes as I could for my voyage—CDs, a bag full of Krispy Kreme donuts, my Mets baseball cap, some Slippery Elm eucalyptus lozenges, foam earplugs, and also put my clothes into a suitcase with wheels: where I was going was frighteningly linear, and I had reason to believe circles, ovals, pillars, donut shapes and the like would be terribly necessary in the days ahead. The popular notion is that touring is a fantastic opportunity for sensuality, a cornucopia of fleshly distractions. In fact, it is a chilly, rectangular space. Airplanes are the future. To love, you will have to love a jet. I hoped my rounded objects would help make me ready to do so.

My driver to the airport made the first mistake, trying to outsmart a jam on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway by taking side streets. We exited at McGuinness Boulevard to find that down below was only the chaos of other thwarted rebels trying to reboot into the mainstream of traffic. First lesson: in the future you stay on the highway. The old way out is now the new way in.

I boarded the jet. Dogman called on the cellular while I was still on the tarmac, pretending he could see me against the night sky. Dogman likes to conflate various levels of experience for amusing effects. He regarded my travel as a good sign, a sign that I was due to have some fun. “Your dick is bigger than ever,” he said. “Don’t forget that.” The sentiment is appreciated, but it’s another example of Twentieth Century thinking. What I know that he doesn’t is that the big dick in two dimensions is microscopically thin when viewed from the side. He’s seen a billboard for the future, one which blocks his view of the future itself. In the future, my dick, like anyone’s, will have to thread the technological obstacle course, and in that pursuit size is no help at all.

Airplane food was, as I feared, all squared. I cut off the corners and slipped them into the airsick bag.

At the first stop, an old friend from my former life took me aside. I could tell he was curious about my assignment, but there was very little I could safely say. He clapped me on the back and spoke in a whisper. “All I have to say, man, is I hope this all translates into pussy.” I didn’t have the heart to tell him he’d misunderstood the problem. Not only doesn’t it translate into pussy, it doesn’t translate at all. This movement through the sky, movement through time, it isn’t a language of any kind. To find love here involves letting go of language.

Stewardesses were sexy; flight attendants are not. But to go where I am going, in order to make love to the jet, I’ll need to learn to find the flight attendants sexy. I’ve developed a theory. The sexuality of flight attendants broadcasts on a channel back in time—men in the 1950s are, I think, still being aroused by the energies coming off the bodies of the flight attendants today, which accumulates in the bodies of stewardesses in the past. The stewardesses in the 1950s are therefore growing more sexy with each passing year.

On the plane again the next day, I readied myself by listening to Islamic music on the Discman, changing my clothes under the thin blue astronaut’s blanket, performing a series of limbering exercises in my seat without disturbing the travellers to my right and left. I was briefly amused to imagine that this might be the same set of preparations engaged in by a terrorist, once long ago. The airplane is a place of hidden agendas, all sheathed in the same steel casing. A terrorist or a jet lover like myself is akin to a piece of gristle hidden inside a frankfurter.

I called Dogman on the Airfone. He is beginning to understand that my landings and takeoffs are beside the point, and mean no more than does my time on the ground. What happens in the air is the point.

Today I made the leap, and transformed myself into ’50s Man. It is he who will be able to find love on the jet. I did it by the simplest possible operation, entering a portal left behind—accidentally? Who knows? It began when I noticed in the lavatory a thin slot in the

wall marked for "used razor blades." Really, what an astoundingly obvious clue. In the airport later that day I was able, fortuitously, to purchase a stainless-steel shaver with flat, double-edged disposable blades. Then on the flight today I excused myself, and shaved in the bathroom. It was '50s Man who emerged.

It was then that I began to notice the airplane's curves.

When you love a jet, you love it all the way. The passengers are beside the point. And the crew is helpless to stop you. The black box won't tell your tale. You love it from your seat, without the aid of the oxygen mask, often without moving your seat out of the upright position dictated by the FAA for landing and takeoff. Oh, you might slip off your seatbelt to make room for your erection. You might go that far. But loving a jet leaves no mark on the turbines, no fingerprints on the wing or tail struts. We go into this future in a passive ecstasy, knowing our place. Knowing our size against the sky. I think in the next world all 360 passengers could love a jet at one time and not cause a shred of turbulence. But I'll wager I was the only one today.

In the hotel that night I found my reward, the home version of the vast love I'd found in the air, set flush into the smooth plastic wall of a Jacuzzi. I fit my penis into the stream, cupping my left hand around it from underneath to guide the rush of bubbles. The jetstream coursed, pummeling me with bubbles. The water rushed me forward, hurrying me out of the past and into the future. I came obediently into the foam.