
Layover Jetlag Lei Plane Ghost Love

Ghosts are not what I thought they would be, says a man with a backwards baseball cap to a woman wearing a Louisiana State t-shirt and way too much eye make-up. She has cartoon eye, here exaggerated eyelashes and blue eye-shadow make the blue of her eyes even more pronounced, her expression of surprise at what the man is saying blown out of proportion. And when she answers, she speaks in Spanish. She says, Well, ghosts are tricky.

The man replies, also in Spanish, something about fog, and I'm either suddenly fluent in a new language or so tired that I'm having auditory hallucinations. I look at the woman's eyes again. They seem big but not so weird anymore. They laugh and sip their coffee and I go back to waiting for my flight.

This terminal is haunted, says one flight attendant to another as they pass us by. I turn to check if the couple heard but they are lost in conversation and this time I can't understand a word they're saying.

Jetlag takes over and my eyes are heavy.

Try not to think about it, I hear someone say as I drift, and though they're not saying it to me I try to follow the advice. I try not to think about how I got on one plane crossing the Atlantic and then another from East to West coast and now wait to take a third to the middle of the Pacific while he's already reached his destination just hours from where we started from. I try not to think about beginnings and endings and all these places that are simultaneously home, and I am several people, one of whom is currently sitting with her feet up on a beat-up suitcase in LAX waiting, another one still on a plane flying, always flying, one back home, another somewhere else entirely, all those multiple versions of me, I try not to think because there are too many thoughts. One of my other selves somewhere jumps in a warm pool, listens to palm trees, this is the self I think about when I need quiet, I slip in and out of her consciousness,

feel the water and sun on my face, close my eyes, feet on suitcase, airport traffic buzzing by.

Maybe I'm the ghost haunting the terminal. Maybe this isn't really LAX. Maybe the plane crashed and I never made it to the other side. Or maybe I'm lazy with jetlag and I'm sad that nobody's picking me up and when I get home to Honolulu I'll buy myself a drink, and a lei from one of the airport stands and welcome myself home.

I.M.¹

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