Thank You For Dying

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"It's funny the things that cross your mind when you think you're about to die. My bed was unmade, and I had some dirty clothes on my floor. When my mom goes to clean out my closet, would I disappoint her from the next world? Dust the VCR. Vacuum under the bed. All those nagging lessons gone to waste. Her daughter had died a slob."

Cover Page Footnote
KATIE VALVANO

THANK YOU FOR DYING

It’s funny the things that cross your mind when you think you’re about to die. My bed was unmade, and I had some dirty clothes on my floor. When my mom goes to clean out my closet, would I disappoint her from the next world? Dust the VCR. Vacuum under the bed. All those nagging lessons gone to waste. Her daughter had died a slob.

Ding. Fasten Seatbelts.

The words to the Hail Mary escape my quivering lips. Not all consecutive in their proper formation; but the idea is there. A tiny imprint of a cross engraves itself between my forefinger and thumb. My mom gave me the necklace for my confirmation.

Ding. No Smoking.

Two thick sheets of plastic restrain me from being sucked out the window, into the clouds, into nothingness, into abyss, into my fate. A giant terradactyl wing terrifies my constructed view. Its eggshell sheets of steel could not withstand a snowstorm. I know it.

Ding. The boarding door is now closed.

No way out. She was a good girl, a nice girl, a scared girl. An empty coffin slams shut. The body was never found.

Ding.

Transform your seat into a life preserver. Life preserver. Will it save me from the crash? I won’t need it after the fall. Place the mask on your face before assisting others. Snakes in a can. Surprise. You’re going down. Would I use this? Will I use this? Laughing gas: it will get me high as I plummet.

Ding.

Voltage roars thunder under my feet. It’s too loud; not right. I know it. Wheels shake my chair. Tin bird legs can’t support us. Clinking up the rollercoaster faster faster higher louder. No one speaks.

A sinking red sun teases the plane. Ole! The yellow billboard on the road to the airport reads “If not now, when?”

Ding.

Deep inside my body I hide, no longer in control of my limbs. Unable to soften my grip on the cold metal armrests, red fingers fade cold to white. Toes forever curled under my feet. Ears popping eyes burning throat shrinking tears streaming. I’ve forgotten how to control my breathing.

Ding.

Thank you for dying Delta. What did she say?


Ding.