Wearing jeans at the airport

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Cover Page Footnote

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LORI DOVIDIO DABBAGH

WEARING JEANS AT THE AIRPORT
CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT
PARIS, FRANCE, MAY 2000

My husband’s passport was blue
but big bulky blue
not quaint compact blue.
My children’s pictures—
tiny orange-like heads and blurred eyes—
secured on the inside cover
of their quaint compact blue passports.

My husband’s suit was blue—
a shade lighter than the navy
of his big bulky passport—
but still they stopped him
at every corner
and searched his luggage
and searched his person
and questioned him like inquisitors
while I held the hands
of my little blue passport-bearing children
who were living replicas
of computerized photo aging.

My husband’s tie was even blue—
royal blue with sky-blue geometric shapes—
and I looked around at the jeans and sweatshirts and sneakers
of tourists and home-bound travelers.

I dream of the day
he can wear jeans at the airport, too,
and pass unnoticed
among the home-bound travelers and tourists
and bypass searches and inquisitions
because he bears that little compact blue passport

even though other searches and inquisitions
await outside
the automatic sliding glass doors.