

Wednesday Wings

By Kimbra Cutlip

On Wednesday nights she flies to Mykonos to meet her lover. Her husband drops her off at the bus station, and she takes number 27 to Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. He will go home and make the dinner she has set out for them, believing she gets off at the community college, that she is finishing the degree she abandoned at the onset of motherhood. In her backpack she carries the sundresses he has never seen, the ones she wears on Wednesday mornings to wipe accumulated dust from the bookshelves, clean smudges from the glass coffee table, and fold the children's clothing, and his underwear.

In the terminal, she joins a river of passengers searching for their proper place under the glow of yellow fluorescent lights. On the board she finds her flight. JFK to Athens direct. Only on Wednesdays. Usually gate 17.

A caucus of Greek travelers congregates at the onramp to their homeland—families and businessmen. She places her backpack on the floor and sits in a plastic seat along a wall of glass—a thin invisible plane between her and the tarmac. Sometimes she can detect the scent of olive oil lingering on the larger women who seem never to have left their island. These are only the briefest of visitors. She inhales them, the energy of their adventures like static in the air around them. In the crowded space, with so many hours ahead of them, they speak in a rhythmic blend of syllables that ride on the waves of their excitement, their frustration, their boredom.

She closes her eyes and lets their voices carry her to her lover. He waits for her on the dock. She calls to him, “Oneiropólos,” and he waves. In the months they have

spent making love, she has not learned his real name or the meaning of the words he speaks in her ear. She knows only the name of his boat and the smell of fish and the sea.

He tells her he loves her, or perhaps he tallies the day's catch or makes lists of nets and bait he will buy tomorrow. It does not matter. What matters is the music in his words, the vibration of their skin under the hot sun. His voice rising and falling with her hips beneath him.

What matters is that when she arrives his hands are strong enough to remove her sensible ballet flats. His fingers are nimble with the buttons of her Lands End shirt. His palm is wide and rough as he embraces the soft white of her belly. He doesn't turn from it for her modesty.

In the morning, they swing on the anchor in a light breeze while he carefully opens a perfect fish with his filet knife. He exposes the sweet flesh, feeds it to her with his fingers. He brushes untamed strands of hair from her face. Her lips are full and red beneath his kiss. Her hazel eyes reflect the sun in glints of green.

She has no fantasies in Mykonos that she is younger, or more beautiful. Only that she can stay.

When the flight attendants call the passengers to board, she watches mothers herd their children and collect their many bags of souvenirs. She waits until the last passenger has crossed through the gate, and the flight attendant prepares to clear the walkway and close the door.

"Is this your flight, Ma'am?" the attendant asks.

"No. My flight was earlier," she says. "I must have missed it." One day, she says to herself, she will buy a ticket.