Window Seat

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I’m squat in the window seat of an Air Canada Airbus, a cigar tube with wings, flying from Halifax to Vancouver, while claustrophobia seeps into my swollen feet, my luck to be squashed in the worst seat after my assigned aisle seat disappeared in a new plane’s design (the plane is full, sir), panic about needing the lavatory (airplanes, the only place I use that word), and the woman in the middle seat smells like Avon, or my long-gone grandmother, and waves through the window at people she can’t see, who can’t see her, a kind of hopeful, hopeless sentimentalism, and I know I need to breathe, in and out, but I want to scream, at least histrionically,
and last night while visiting my parents, Uncle Bert dropped in as he does on Sunday evenings, and told stories about all the fights he’s had and continues to have (he listed a veritable Who’s Who of local businesses, bank managers, bureaucrats, a litany of complaints about almost everybody, a victim of a convoluted vicious conspiracy, even though it always seems to me my uncle lives a charmed life), and suddenly my complaints about my seat and the waving woman are Uncle Bert’s complaints. Everything works or doesn’t work according to laws of physics or philosophy or fate or faith. Things work out, at least sometimes, at least somehow, in some ways, perhaps. I could spend my entire life being upset, fighting with people and ghosts, and while I want my aisle seat, and I want somebody to show more interest in my poetry, and I want to publish more, and I want to be cited, and I want to lose weight, and I want clerks at Wal-Mart to smile a little more, and I want people at Silver City Cinemas to turn off their phones and chatter and translations, I mostly just want to grow enough wisdom for deciding when to speak
up and when to ignore stuff. So, I smile at the woman crammed into the seat beside me, and I wave through the window just in case somebody in the terminal can see us, even though I know they can’t.