



## The Trade of Escape

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### Elaine Sexton

The film star drops out of the sky  
when his prop plane loses an engine,  
Tupac is shot, and his body  
guard, too. Both items are news  
you hear as you wait on hold  
on the phone in the office. The radio  
broadcasts a mixture of sun & clouds  
you can't see without windows.  
The West Side Drive is backed up  
for miles, a twenty minute delay  
expected, outbound  
at the Williamsburgh Bridge  
and the Mid-Town Tunnel. Today  
you rummage in your desk for an aspirin,  
while the call you made makes you wait.  
You draw small crafts in the margin  
of a yellow pad, and forget who it is  
you have called. Boats with outboard  
engines, a float plane with its single propeller,  
coast on a Pilot pen's ink, little black swells  
form to a tune by Vivaldi who replaces  
the news. A willow tree drops its weeping  
leaves down one side of the page, and by now  
you've left the building, the city.  
The letters and phone have become  
props in a stage for departure. How many  
wings will it take to lift you, intact, over  
the side of your cube by the mail room?  
Every day deliveries come and go. Express,  
Overnight, Second Day, Same Day. One day  
a courier asks you which way is out,  
and you follow the directions you gave him.

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