

What We Thought About Just After the Shot

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Tuscany, perhaps, and haircuts, no longer baking casseroles twice a week or delivering groceries to someone else's family. The warm new weight of a cousin's baby, or the clarifying light of an afternoon alone. The awkwardness of kisses and restaurants. I thought of my father as a child, who almost died of polio, the nurse who berated him into re-learning how to walk. I watched a woman in the chair beside me snap selfies, one man twisting in his seat as he tried to thank everyone. *I'm flying home,* someone murmured, *in just a month.* Some thought of funerals. Some thought of sons they couldn't yet convince, or worried how much the side effects would cost. Perhaps some thought of burning forests, of rhetoric and politicians. Most likely considered something simpler yet more complex: how gratitude was now a dictionary written in all the languages of the world. I thought of my husband and my mother's aging body, the scar on her upper arm I'd fingered as a child. Pitted, pale, round as the moon whose light, she said, I would see anywhere I traveled, linking her to me, and us to everyone.