

AIRBORNE AFTERTHOUGHTS

Boarding the flight to Singapore
she was wearing that bossy black dress,
the twins tugging at her, a double dose
of mouthing in two languages, and if
he hadn't met her years ago in Kuala Lumpur,
and if the sun weren't prying around, flaring
pinpoints of color in her hair, he might
not be so close behind.

But his morning glances had already caught
the flickering mangrove greens in her eyes.
What was she now, 43? Not much changed
by modern Malaysia, America or England. Not
affected by her husband's status or salary
like some of the lofty-nosed wives

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He could persuade her into a sarong kabaya,
take the hairpins out of that damn bun
like he did last night, and 20 years vanished.
Why did words sound hollow as rebanna drums
and say less? There had to be a newer, better way
to tell the woman how he felt, beginning
long before that dual edition of jungle genes
between them ever said "Daddy."