

# STILLPOINT

A MAGAZINE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

## WINGSTROKE

### ANNE MARIE WIRTH CAUCHON

I had looked at this—our first issue created especially for those who choose to support the work of Stillpoint Magazine financially—as a moment of respite. FLIGHT, or as schizoanalytic thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari envision them, “lines of flight.” Flight, and lines of it, that offer escape paths, paths between paradigms in the moment of historical shift or revolution, ways to (or experiences of) freedom. Even if that escape or change or freedom is only fleeting, even if that flight can only leave traces—evidence—for another, possible, hidden world.

But I’m grounded, stranded, velcroed to the land; maybe you are too. And so the visceral—rather than conceptual—aspects of flight are those that tempt me. The moment of liftoff, imperceptible at first, and then the cut through cloud cover, the rupture, the emergence into the expanse of sky. Horizonless.



*L'altro Cielo (Dream Warrior) (PTI) (still) – Klaus Capra*

Is it a cliché if it has become unattainable?

I'd intended to start this editorial statement with those elements of flight I'd set for contributors: experiences of political, personal, and ethical liftoff; wisdom for finding escape while staying the course through struggle for equity, justice; experience for perseverance and freedom through the stillness of lockdown; the transformative and revelatory gifts of literature, of knowledge. And those elements are here in the digital pages that follow.

But there remains the body. The body that can never be captured or represented sufficiently in a non-space like this: the digital. The truncated, sutured, still body surrounded by screens and screens and screens. How can I truly evoke a notion like flight—its bodily totality, its abandonment—to you, finding this message in yet another screen? And both of us velcroed, grounded, stranded, stuck. Where, then, is flight?

I stole this title from a story by Vladimir Nabokov: "Wingstroke," a story of angels and suicide. A story of skiing. "Wingstroke," a story rife with problems of gender, sex, and class. And also, a story with a worthy and conflicted depiction of flight. Flight in "Wingstroke" is not transatlantic but is instead depicted as a refusal to participate; flight is intimacy—from within a single room—with the monstrous, desirous, winged creatures that exist beyond the perceptible world and visit (stinking) only at night; flight is unending longing for what remains just out of reach—like the dead, the unattainable, or the beloved; flight is the moment of elation, just before the fall.

Here, in my home, in my wounded, healing city, liftoff would be an abandonment, a betrayal. And so, instead I'll leave you with flight like Nabokov has it. I'll leave you with the sublimity of flight not at liftoff, but at descent, at arrival.

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*L'altro Cielo (Dream Warrior)* (PTI) is shown here as a still from the full accompanying video available at [stillpointmag.org](http://stillpointmag.org).

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