

# Rae Armantrout

## CANCELLATION

The idea that,  
if I say it well enough,  
fear  
will be gone.

If I say it well enough  
to make you believe

The idea that,  
if you believe me,  
our two beliefs  
will cancel one another out.

\*

In the departure gate,  
the bag atop her bag spells  
“Paradise...”

Paranormal. Parable.

Syllable as passenger.

\*

A woman on a cell phone tries:

“Are you annoyed?”

“Mom seemed...

good.”

\*

Last night, suddenly,  
my head or the room  
was spinning.

Now the airline's name  
rises to the top  
of the screen and  
disappears.

## REAL ARTICLE

Everything I know  
is something I've repeated.

Lazy horn solo  
tries to wander off,  
but can't,

or does,  
and we don't notice.

Veterans Day flags  
lap idly  
at their poles.

The day is warm.  
"The."

## RECORDING

1

It occurs to me that, in the old city, the small peculiarities which I like to record, standing out against the familiar chains at home, might not stand out at all or might not seem very peculiar. Here everything is singular and strangeness may be hard to recognize as such. Or not. I don't know and there is no way to ask the inhabitants about it.

2

As part of the language lesson,  
I have holes cut in my forehead.

I am to learn by feel  
to insert the proper keys.

I play along, though,  
privately,  
I still have my doubts.