

JESSE MORALES

Map of Leaving

When my father leaves for Ranger school
as when we left from Italy, he for Seoul,
I'm flagging the poster map with pins,
again leaving holes.
Regarding the earth's span: here,
on my wall, it's no wider than my arms.
Such a bluster of geometry
I'm weaving, waiting for the engine
to thrust free,
my heart whooshing on the gravel drive
as much as the tires.
Here's a list of the places I wish to go,
not for work or for war
but for the treble flush of their names:
Kathmandu, Monrovia,
Tashkent and Egypt and Prague.
If I traveled there, and made it home,
would I know what my father knows?
How, as in field training,
to rest without sleeping three nights through,
my circulation tighter and slowed?
This is what my father knows:
how to divine an aging fanbelt's

subtle crusty slip,
how to separate that sound
from his woodshop's apiary drone, and those
from the telltale song of a bomb
flush with altitude.
He knows: how, for a moment,
to stop fluttering.
And this is what I would know:
how to survive,
sixty-one days apart from him,
two states away from Fort Benning.
Maybe I'll pin this missive of solitude
to its point on my wall.

JESSE MORALES, a native of Greensboro, North Carolina, writes as a form of listening.