

Customs

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My dreams? They've always been made out of words.

My head, so full of them, all the unused metaphors, gunpowder.

The airport X-ray machine has me put my arms up, scans me through.

"We detect metal," an officer says. He is of a special breed: a working animal.

He has me go back and forth through the machine. "Your head lights up,"

he says. In a military state, words are bullets, you understand. So he calls

for his supervisor. Together they open my mouth, lift my eyelids, examine

my ears. Concerned as they are, they even search

the dark barrels of my nostrils.

