

## Notice of Baggage Inspection

"To protect you and your fellow passengers. . . ."  
the message begins.

"Your bag was among those selected. . . ."

A card pops out of my single piece  
of checked luggage after the flight.  
(Whose hands, I wonder,  
have been searching for contraband  
among my underwear?)

"We appreciate your understanding  
and cooperation."

I do understand, of course,  
the same way any victim  
of a mugging understands.  
"Cooperation," however, suggests  
I had a choice.

I make choices when I can—  
which is why this bag contains books  
of poetry which might challenge  
some inspector's sense of security  
had she taken the time to read. Also,  
I chose to be present last time  
Lynne Stewart came before a judge.  
(If anyone listening right now does not  
yet know the name "Lynne Stewart,"  
please make the choice to find out.)

True: all of my poems, so many  
crowded courtrooms, our demonstrations  
and other acts of resistance  
impact their well-fortified reality  
as much as the protest of the sea  
against a seawall on some mild  
spring afternoon. Remember, however:  
the same laws of force and motion

which propel these gentle waves  
work identically when the tsunami arrives  
to sweep the seawall away.

And after the tsunami, which sweeps away  
all of their security check-points, courtrooms,  
border guards, and prison cells, I  
will embark on another journey: this time  
to the address which today houses this  
Transportation Security Administration.  
There I will put up a plaque to proclaim:

"We appreciate your understanding  
and cooperation."

Steve Bloom  
February 2010