

March 15, 2010

**ANDREW HERWITZ, WINNER OF THE WINTER EDITION OF THE *WING IT!*  
STUDENT CONTEST**

The Global Film Initiative and Virgin America airlines congratulate Andrew Herwitz, winner of the winter edition of the *Wing It!* student contest. Andrew's creative and award-winning interpretation of our "What's Happening?" winter theme wins him two roundtrip tickets on Virgin America airlines. Read his essay below.

**Dirt, Rubber, and the Living Earth**

By Andrew Herwitz

The earth, like a gentle tidal wave, swallows up the boy. His cheek is pressed against the fresh wet dirt. His nostrils, so close to the soil, smell fresh, beautiful smells. It smells like it has just rained, like it has just rained for days and days and now the earth is laden with dew, is calm, is glistening like a jewel as the nervous sun furtively peaks its head around the foliage of clouds. The boy likes the darkness, here in this crater, in this subterranean place, this dark comfortable home. Unable to see anything he instead senses the world, feels the heartbeat of the earth, feels it beating in his ears, moving down his body, echoing in this hollow chamber. The earth is living, the earth is breathing.

It smells like the day they buried his mother. He remembers hiding in someone's shirt, his face buried in fabric, feeling the coarse patterned cloth against his face, smelling cigarettes, smelling perfume, smelling the rot of earth, smelling people, people he knows, people he loves. He has no time for them now. He has no time for love. Love is nothing compared to the earth, to the dark wet rubber pillow, that cradles his head, to the sweet musty wet smells that fill his lungs and make his head swarm with pleasant thoughts, with a warm numbness. Here, in this darkness, he can be back there, back where they buried his mother, or he can be back in her arms, or he can be anywhere, or he can be nowhere.

His father blocks out the sun, appears at the rim of his haven, appears like a tower rising above the sweet sick earth. The boy doesn't look up, doesn't leave the shadows, the cold calm darkness. But he senses his father, knows him by his shadow, by the commanding familiar thud of his footsteps, by the sound of his breathing. The father opens his mouth to say something to the boy, but he finds that he has nothing to say, and suddenly resents the idea of intruding upon the silence. Father, son, so aware of each other, sensing each other, knowing each other. They are aware of so many things in this moment, so many things that need not be said, that are simply understood. A perfect balance, like the balance in nature, like the harmony of the seasons. They are intensely aware of the heartbeat of the earth, feeling it beating, beating, beating, a constant timpani, a flowing ceaseless rhythm, an eternal forward march. The Father and son both know that, unlike human beings, the earth outlives everything.