

Oh please, not now...

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It is always good to be back home, even after a trip that has been wonderful. There is something about one's own bed, about the dog and cat welcoming you, and of course there was the start of Season 3 of Downton Abbey!

But it was a long trip coming home, and I'm afraid I was somewhat rude to a woman in an airport. It was 6 AM, and I had just emerged from a 10-hour flight (Buenos Aires-New York) during which I had not slept. Groggily I had gone through customs and immigration, and now was waiting at a baggage claim carousel for my suitcase, in order to make my way to my next flight, NY-Boston. A woman standing nearby apparently read my name on my carry-on luggage tag, and asked if I had written *THE GIVER*.

It occurs to me now that I could have said no. There may be other people with my name. I could have been one of them, just for that sleep-deprived morning. But of course I nodded, acknowledging that I had, indeed, written that book.

So she said nice things about the book and I smiled sleepily and thanked her. But then she said she was a would-be writer and she would like my advice. I just stared at her. My brain was thoroughly dead. I tried half-heartedly to explain that. But she said she wanted me to tell her just one bit of important advice. Just *one*.

Oh, dear. I mumbled something intended as wisdom but I'm afraid I did it tersely and ungraciously. It was just that the timing was so bad.

Now I am awake and remembering that moment with regret, but also remembering the wonderful colors of Buenos Aires, as well as the snow-capped peaks of Patagonia, meadows filled with lupine, the soaring condor against the blue sky, and the horses galloping across the endless fields. For starters, here is a sunset.





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