

Fall 1984

Aircraft

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Aircraft

Too frail for combat, he stood
before an interrupted wing,
playing with an idea, nothing serious.
Afternoons, the hall gaped with aluminum
glaring, flying toward the sun; now
though, first thing in the morning, there was only
gray sheen and chatter
from the robust women around him
and the bolt waiting for his rivetter's
five second blast.

The night before in the dark
of the peanut gallery, he listened to blouses shifting
and sniffed magnolias, white
tongues of remorse
sinking into the earth. Then
the newsreel leapt forward
into war.

Why *frail*? Why not simply
family man? Why wings, when
women with fingers no smaller than his
dabbled in the gnarled intelligence of an engine?

And if he gave just a four second blast,
or three? Reflection was such

a bloodless light.
After lunch, they would bathe in fire.