

## THE HISTORY OF FLIGHT

---

*Vincent Casaregola*

I pull one hand free  
and then manage the other,  
grasp the nearest fragment  
and crawl out of the wreckage  
to be simply here again, on the ground.  
It never fails to surprise me  
that such huge contraptions  
are so breakable, so fragile.  
Like the *Hindenburg*,  
that huge shape of disaster,  
couldn't they tell it looked like a bomb?  
My ship here, or what remains, wanted to fly,  
so I thought.  
Maybe not, maybe all designs like this  
relish their own explosive ends,  
each one grander than the next.

I don't mind the mopping up,  
the post mortem with hundreds of men  
in black overalls and caps  
pawing the trash,  
delighted and obscene.  
I don't mind being at rest, on the ground,  
even if it seems piecemeal,

fragmented,  
that's just a delusion.  
All my pleasant structure,  
twisted to no pattern,  
is unified by common gravity,  
by the simple fact of hitting earth.  
Force and counterforce decide  
what shape should fly and what,  
with some drastic revision,  
becomes simplified matter.

I walk away, accustomed to  
the slightly burnt odor of my clothes  
and the charred look I've taken on.  
Someone hands me a piece of paper,  
and someone else grins and slips me a pencil,  
no bromides, just the implication.  
But I refuse, I will draw no more straight lines,  
making three dimensions out of two.  
Plate riveted to plate deceives itself—  
physics don't matter—the thing takes on  
a mind of its own, a life, a death wish.  
I love flying, but the machinery  
gets in the way—birds fly  
because they grow wings and  
fall into the air, and I, falling,  
become part of the air,  
no object.  
No more design, I will balance on the edge,  
close my eyes and take the fall  
with a single motion, nothing else.