

PATRICIA HOOPER

*The Seabee*

In June when Mother drove us to the lake  
my father stayed behind, but Friday mornings  
he flew up in his Seabee, circling over  
the cottage till we ran outside and waved.  
He tipped one sunlit, silver wing, then landed  
and taxied to the dock. Even before  
he stepped down from the cockpit, neighbor children  
came running to greet him: clearly, this was fame.

At night, when the woods and lake grew dark, I slept  
on the screened-in porch where I could watch the Seabee  
rocking and the moon stroking its wings.  
One morning waves rolled in—the beach was gone—  
and when my brother and I ran out to swim,  
racing to reach the plane, a buoyant spill  
of iridescent fuel slipped past our arms;

and then too high a wave, and I was swept  
under the dock where water struck the boards,  
and sand from the bottom roiled so thick I knew  
that only the power that sent me plunging under  
could pull me back. For a long moment while  
I caught my breath, unnerved, I didn't panic,  
but watched from churning water how the sun  
shone through the slats as if the day went on

without me, as before. And then I saw  
how it would be: the cots and chairs put back  
in storage, car doors closing, and the Seabee  
waiting, its silver undersides, the first  
familiar, sputtering, finally deafening sound  
of its propeller, gaining, and its wake  
above me, as it steadied, lifting off.