

As One Woman of Thousands at Douglas,
Santa Monica, During WWII

I don't want that lifetime again
except to touch the world out there
the way I did then, when near midnight
cool ocean air wakened my steps
as I strained to reach the shroud
of camouflage stretched from gate to gate.
That huge tent of hum belonged to us!

Sometimes on the dark field in the back
I'd make out a great metallic bird or two
eyes dimmed along their sides.
When their motors revved high,
I breathed the thrill of being alive
being part of something bigger than I,
something urgent like the DC3s
we build, like our presence beside men
in a place off-limits before,
like our joy and sadness at war's end.

- Celia Piehl