

Three years after my father's final deployment to the Gulf of
Tonkin

In first grade we spent our free time drawing
on big sheets of soft urine-colored paper
the kind that would tear with no sound
like a piece of American cheese—
it would even muffle the sound of the pencil
darkening the page.

The other girls drew houses and people
I and the boys drew planes
dropping bombs. Were there people
on the ground? I just remember the difficulty
of drawing good planes. Because we were
drawing them from another pilot's point of view—
you saw the side of the plane, the cockpit,
and the bombs squeezing out the rear
like turds—but how to show the wings?
The wings were even worse than
the girls' task of drawing feet and noses.