

# Planes

*Cyrus Shafii*

When I was younger,  
I would watch the sky  
for hours  
for my father.  
He would leave in the morning,  
All day,  
as planes flew overhead  
I knew  
He was their master.  
I wondered if he could see me  
and waved just in case

Back in Tehran,  
when he was younger,  
my father would watch the sky for hours.  
Climbing plumb trees,  
standing on rooftops,  
pausing in soccer fields  
and classrooms  
whenever he finished his tests early,  
he watched his own planes



and knew as well.

When he was the age I am now,  
his mother met him in a military hallway.  
Holding crisp papers in proud hands,

he let  
her tell  
him no.

Don't fly for this war.  
Don't fly after.  
You might fall.

Don't make your mother  
watch you fall from the sky  
when you hang the stars for her.

So he didn't.

Years later,  
as he drove people to airports,  
he named my brother for the birds.  
He and my mother  
took blue and white sponges



to the wall  
to make clouds for us.  
He made us stop  
to watch the moon  
in the blue day sky.

As midnight passes  
I lay awake in bed,  
I forget  
the planes flying overhead  
are planes  
and not missiles,  
someone in a suit forgetting us.  
The suited figure expects praise  
from us as my father tells me about  
his family  
who hung the sky for him  
Back home.

My mother died a year after his.  
He says  
they can see us on the ground.  
I look down  
because if I never check,  
I'll never have to know if it's true or not.