radius blending with the B datum, course later they'll
have to blend it anyway because of the 220 thousandth
fillet radius tapering down to 60 thousandths on this
side and 50 thousandths on that side so maybe it doesn't
matter, but I'd watch it. 'Course you could turn the
part around and cock the head on the 4-degree 12-minute
angle instead and come in the other way then you wouldn't
have to worry about the 100 thousandths, but you'll have
to stay away from the B datum wall so I don't know...."
and the final buzzer blares
making him jump and drop the part
on the workbench in front of me yelling "Good Luck!"
as he races off
and I stare at his toolbox and finally
understand
why it has that sticker stuck to it saying,
"KEEP IT SIMPLE STUPID!"

THERAPY

Our machine shop supervisor
was always hiding behind posts
or hurrying up and down the aisles,
glancing about as if he were lost.
He began to stutter
and spend more and more time
in the toilet stalls,
until one day he climbed up onto one of our machines
and began screaming
that we were all against him.

We gathered about the machine he stood on
and looked up at him in silent respect
of his long overdue decision
to deal with reality.

UNQUALIFIED

George
was relatively new at Goodstone Aircraft Company,
and he puzzled and frowned
at our time-consuming, tedious attention
to plus or minus thousandths of an inch
tolerances
on blueprints for various K-20 bomber parts
always turning the handles furiously on his machine
and making piles of metal chips
5 or 10 times as big as ours,
coming over to our machines and shaking his head
at our pitiful production
and the close tolerances on our blueprints

and shouting, "It's just a NUT!" or "It's just a fucking
FOOD TRAY!" or "It's just a TOILET HANDLE for Christsake!"

We all felt sorry for George.
It was beginning to look like he just didn't have what it
takes to work in such a high-tech
vital-to-national-security
program.

NATIONAL SECURITY

A man from the offices
comes by to lean over my toolbox and tell me in low voice
that the Air Force is coming through
and so the supervisor wants
the manufacturing orders and parts conformance charts
in their proper clear-plastic folder-like
envelopes,
as he gathers the paperwork up from
my workbench and stuffs it all into the plastic envelope
so that I will have to take it out again
when I want to use it
later,
and sets the envelope down neatly onto the top of my
toolbox and walks off toward the next machinist.

It sure is good to know
that the Air Force is keeping a close watch
on such a really vital aspect
of our job.

GO WITH THE FLOW

The Goodstone Manufacturing Standards
books are in 5 volumes that are each 4 inches thick
and 12 inches high
and stacked
at several strategic locations around the machine shop,
full of standards for things like
finish and squareness and taper and concentricity
tolerances
on the aircraft parts we manufacture,
but only once
in the 2 years I have worked at Goodstone Aircraft Company
have I actually seen someone
drag one of the 10-pound volumes off its shelf
and carry it to their workbench and thumb through it
looking to see if the part they were making
was within Goodstone Manufacturing Standards' tolerances,
even though every blueprint we use
states that we are to work according to
those standards.