

After all of those hundreds and hundreds of aircraft
we've made,
I guess none of us wants to be the one
to discover
what we might have been doing wrong.

CRITICAL CONDITION

The machinists were concerned.
Curly
hadn't been doing too well
that from-behind pussy shot
of a woman bent over with her legs spread
that he moved along on the calendar on his toolbox,
sticking it to the dates
when he had gotten laid by his wife,
hadn't moved in a long time — it was stuck way back
on the 11th and it was now
the 20th and his trademark grin
was becoming more and more forced as he tried to swagger
about
and said, "I'm sorry"
whenever another machinist pointed out that his pussy
shot hadn't moved.

But the machinists really started to get worried
that morning of the 24th when they
passed by
his toolbox and saw
that he'd removed the pussy shot from his calendar
entirely.

A man who has lost his reason for being
is in real trouble.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

There has been an acid bath
leak over between buildings 51 and 52
and all of the machinists in 3 buildings
have been evacuated leaving behind
their open toolboxes and thermoses and lunches.
They are now milling about in front of building 54
having put in too many hours for Goodstone Aircraft Company
to get away with sending them home with less than a
full day's pay,
and with nothing to do
but stand around
with their hands behind their backs
relaxed and joking in shifting circles
of conversation like executives —

until a junior executive
has the supervisors announce
that the machinists will begin a walking
heads-to-the ground sweep of the asphalt roadway
around the offices and then
of the mile-square company parking lot
in order to pick up paper and cigarette butts.

Whew.

Another dangerously out-of-control situation
among the machinists
averted
by quick-witted management.

NO EXCEPTIONS

At the end of his shift
the machinist spends an hour
cleaning his machine,
sticking the tip of the barrel of his airgun
down into each trough and way
of the machine table
and blasting them clean, blowing chips out and up
into the air where they rain down
all over the floor around the machine,
running his airgun barrel
up and down each trough and way
and blasting
until every last chip is blown out,
then lifting the covers to the coolant drains
at the bottom of the troughs
and blowing out every last chip and drop of coolant
there,
at last wiping down the table
with rags and towels
until it shines spotless and clean as new

so that the machinist on the next shift
can come in
and immediately begin covering the table
and filling up its troughs and ways
with new piles of blue coolant-soaked
steel chips
as he continues the job
they have been running for weeks.

THE IMMOVABLE OBJECT

Lincoln never accomplished anything.
He just walked around his machine all night
with his hands closed up into fists
sticking his chin out