

Terror From Above

by C.D. Reimer

Maureen leaned forward as the screaming airliner with its outstretched landing gears flew over her three young children in the kiddy pool on the front lawn, who looked up with the fearful eyes of baby ground squirrels as the hawk's shadow darkened the sky above them. As the jetliner disappeared over the tree line of the park across the street, the children pointed their little fingers at the empty sky and squealed with delight from being briefly terrified. She sat back in her recliner chair on the porch, letting her anxiety ease away until the next airliner passes overhead.

"It's a nice place, Dad," she said, conceding the obvious.

"I can your mother's skepticism in your voice," Dad said from his recliner chair, sipping a strawberry margarita. "Spit it out, darling."

Maureen sighed. "The house sits underneath the flight path of the San Jose International Airport."

"For a mere fifty-thousand-dollars in the heart of Silicon Valley, this place was an absolute bargain. If I had moved up to Placerville like your mother—God bless her soul—wanted to do, you would be complaining about the children playing with the football-sized squirrels. You will forget about the planes soon enough. Take the kids over to the park to play."

"A park that was a neighborhood until the city bought out the homeowners to build this buffer zone. I'm surprised that they let this house stay."

"The previous owner was a retired real estate developer, who had enough money and clout to get his way at city hall."

Maureen eyed another airliner roaring overhead. The children stopped playing and squealed again as the predatory shadow fell across them. "I can almost read the brand name on the tires."

"These aren't the huge Galaxy cargo planes that flew fifty feet above the 101 while landing at Moffett Airfield in Sunnyvale, where the Goodyear name was visible for miles away. Always a sight to behold, as if God held the airplanes up in the air."

"I'm more concern about the airplanes falling down on the children."

"Airplanes landing—or taking off, if the wind is blowing in the opposite direction—should be the least of your concerns."

"Oh?" Maureen asked, puzzled. "Is there something you're not telling me?"

A loud whistle pierced the air as something fell into the kiddy pool with a big splash. The children laughed at first, as if Grandpa threw himself down for a big belly flop splash. As the water turned blue and smelled foul, the children cried out in terror.

"Get out of the pool!" Maureen leaped from her recliner chair and down the porch steps to pull her children out by their arms. She looked back at her father. "What the hell is this crap?"

"Blue ice!" Dad sipped his margarita calmly. "Forms on the outside of the airplane if the waste tank has a leak, it falls off when the airplane is flying a holding pattern. I just need to move the kiddy pool over again."

