

Skyraider in Vietnam, wrote about it in *Cheating Death*, and afterward became a test pilot for Hughes Aircraft Company. By concentrating on the aviation aspects of his former boss' life, Marrett has given us a short, readable, and continually fascinating biography. In his telling, Hughes turns out to be a heck of a lot more interesting than Lindbergh, even if Hughes never came close to rivaling him as an aviator.

—Daniel Ford flies a Piper Cub and has never forgotten where he left it.

Air Fare: Stories, Poems & Essays on Flight

ed. by Nickole Brown and Judith Taylor. Sarabande Books, 2004. 237 pp., \$16.95.

Had my eyes not abandoned my cause in the fifth grade, I might be able to relate to the collections of air combat memoirs that are so frequently published. I would have been a fighter pilot, not an editor, and able to vouch for the emotions experienced when, say, one is locked in a death spiral with a Sukhoi or a Focke-

Wulf. Perhaps that's why I so enjoyed *Air Fare*, which seems to chronicle the misanthropy of everyday air travel—a subject to which I can relate.

Take, for instance, the inclusion of an excerpt from Colson

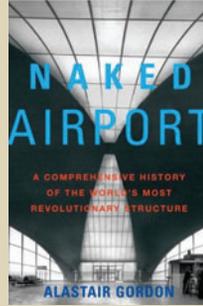


Whitehead's novel *John Henry Days* in which a businessman scours an airport terminal for receipts so that he can be reimbursed for meals others have purchased, then wages an unspoken turf war with another passenger over the unoccupied airliner seat between them. The early placement of such a passage helps to set a wonderfully odious tone for the anthology.

The editors, Nickole Brown and Judith Taylor, have also made sure to address the holy trifecta of air traveler fears: hijackings, crashes, and crying babies—the last in Natalie Serber's short story "This Is So Not Me," in which the physiology of breastfeeding takes a startling central role.

More than half the selections are written by women—a staggering percentage for anything aeronautic—and thus much of *Air Fare* has a noticeably feminine edge. Brown and Taylor have included a poem inspired by Amelia Earhart, one entitled "Lt. Col. Valentina Vladimirovna Tereshkova," after the cosmonaut, and another with instructions that it should be read in the voice of

TERMINAL HISTORIES

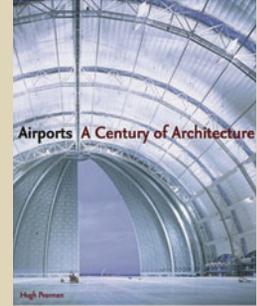


Naked Airport: A Cultural History of the World's Most Revolutionary Structure

by Alastair Gordon. Metropolitan Books, 2004, 320 pp., \$27.50.

Airports: A Century of Architecture

by Hugh Pearman. Harry N. Abrams, 2004, 240 pp., \$75.



No other branch of architecture is as complex and dynamic as the airport—at once comforting and uplifting, practical and symbolic, local and international. Critic Alastair Gordon makes that case in *Naked Airport*, a richly illustrated and highly readable account of airport design as a social phenomenon driven by the unpredictable combustion of technology and politics. The opening chapters could stand alone as a primer about early civilian aviation worldwide; particularly fascinating are comparisons between the sophisticated and rapidly developing European air network following World War I and the more haphazard system of American air fields.

Naked Airport is strongest when tracing the complicated lineage of airport terminals from their beginnings as sheds and tents, through the many regional building styles around the world, to recent practical demands like anti-terrorism security requirements, urgency for floor space to produce huge retail revenues, and "feng shui charm for redirecting the movement of international capital." Airport design follows the requirements of airplanes, people, and ground transportation, and no matter how modern the designs, the buildings become obsolete overnight.

Airports: A Century of Architecture succeeds as a comprehensive visual record of airports around the world from 1904 to 2004, as a coherent history of a specialized architectural genre, as a credible explanation of modern airports as city-states, and, finally, as pure architectural inspiration.

Author Hugh Pearman, who is architecture correspondent for the *Sunday Times* in London, observes that aircraft themselves are relatively permanent in design—the productive lives of some extend to decades—while airports are constantly changing and nearly always inadequate by some measure or other. His outlook is optimistic, though, not only because of the soaring architectural grace that is now easier to attain technically, but also because evolution is constant. Airports closes with six intriguing "futures" of airport design.

—Nan Chase lives in North Carolina and writes about architecture and interior design.

Jacqueline Cochran, the first woman to break the sound barrier.

If such premises make you cringe, skip to Ellen Bass' "Gate C22," about a gawk-worthy display of public affection, or "Romantic Fatalism," in which Alain de Botton calculates the odds of falling in love on a Paris-to-London flight.

While *Air Fare* also comprises entries such as the poem "Gus Grissom Way," about a space program-theme housing development, and the star-crossed AWACS crew love story "Bluegrass Saved My Life," the collection is better when it avoids space and combat and musings on history, better when it sticks to prose, better when it doesn't stretch the bounds of its theme—as it does with an excerpt from Ian McKewan's novel *Enduring Love* about a hot-air balloon tragedy. It's at its best when embracing the truth that everyone in commercial air transportation would rather be somewhere else.

—Sam Goldberg is an Air & Space/Smithsonian associate editor.

Hispano Suiza in Aeronautics: Men, Companies, Engines and Aircraft

by Manuel Lage. SAE International, 2004. 495 pp., \$59.95.

Manuel Lage holds three engineering degrees and apparently knows more about the history of Hispano Suiza than any living person. Readers of *Hispano Suiza in Aeronautics* might conclude that he knows too much. Equipped with enough detail to satisfy the nerdiest engineer, Lage plows through more than 50 years (1913 to 1967) of this company's aviation history.

Most people associate the Spanish company's name with its cars, which

