

## AIR SUPPORT

A dropped school falls through air,  
turning slowly as debris  
pours from windows: a contrail of papers and books  
streams upwards thousands of metres  
alongside computers, chairs, desks that tumble amid  
woodworking equipment, lockers, maps,  
basketballs, stage curtains

all aimed

toward tiny huts far below—a brushy hillside's  
cluster of subsistence farms  
reportedly harboring armed men: fenced yards  
with a few chickens, one cow, an ancient horse eyeing  
six rows of parched vegetables.

Above the school

while it descends,  
another follows, and beyond that, nearly invisible,  
a third floats as the fighter-bomber arcs  
away, and a second jet drones into position.  
The pilot of the first, now on the mission's homeward leg,  
reaches down in his cockpit  
toward a thermos of hot coffee.

On the ground, hospitals released  
in the initial attack wave  
erupt sequentially into plumes of fire and dust  
as the buildings land: operating tables,  
obstetric wards, wheelchairs shatter into shrapnel,  
the jagged particles racing outward amid the roiling smoke  
to slice through mud walls, animal flesh, stone fences,

human lives that cling to the shaking  
shuddering earth  
while they clutch forty-year-old rifles  
or axes, or the hand of a two-year-old  
below the flash of wing  
very distant  
in the blue-and-white sky.

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