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# Pro Rege

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## Failure

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# Failure

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*Mary Dengler*

I watched as Afghans by the hundreds fled  
In terror, pressing toward the U.S. Air Force  
Jet before it closed its doors. I looked in  
Disbelief at humans clinging to its wings  
As it ascended to the sky, then falling toward  
The earth like Icarus, whose cry was heard  
By none. At least he'd felt the joy of having  
Traveled near the sun. What kind of terror  
Motivated such a stunt? Is death by falling  
Better than becoming objects of a hunt  
By terrorists and facing loss of life or body  
Parts? In retrospect, they didn't fail. They chose  
Their terms of death and shamed those tasked  
To rescue them. The others failed—they didn't  
Counter suffering with a ride to death. I've never  
Failed a course, although I have failed tests  
Of courage to endure, but never been  
Abandoned by the ones I served, and humans  
Learn dependence when subjected to another's  
Rule. They really can't be blamed. Abandonment  
By us assured they'd face cruel enemies  
Alone. As thousands waited stupefied  
For night, I turned from my computer screen  
To view my peaceful yard of sun-swept trees  
And felt ashamed and wept. Our rescue missions  
Ended all too soon—our youthful military  
Lie among the dead as citizens and allies  
Hide or plea for help or die. From what we've done  
Or left undone, I see no peaceful years ahead,  
Especially if our fear—of God and all his laws—  
Is dead.