

Marie-Lynn Hammond

"Down on the Station"

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planes on the runway
jet fighters overhead
planes flying through your dreams
when you're lying asleep in your bed
and the job means being ready
for a war no one wants to fight
eternal preparation for those sirens in the night
down on the station
so they play it out on war games
the phone rings early dawn
papa says the code word, grabs his gear
and then he's gone gone gone
and it's the biggest tease of all now
imagine how it feels
to spend your whole life cocked and ready
but you never get to shoot for real
down on the station

and every year they move you
if you're lucky every two or three
so you learn to be real adaptable
'cause that's how a soldier should be
you get good at playing new kid in school
or new wife on the block
you learn not to get too close
you learn when not to talk
down on the station

Operation Nighthawk
mama's pacing up and down the hall
she says Go back to bed now girls
nothing to worry about at all
and for years of course you believe her
until one night you know the score
all it takes is a little bad timing
a slight miscalculation
a critical malfunction
and someone's father don't come home no more
down on the station

and booze was cheap in the mess halls

you can bet it was planned that way
to keep you from thinking too much at night
about what you did all day

so papa stumbles home around midnight
we listen upstairs in fear
he stalks the house like a stranger
mama's once again in tears
oh god and now he's cursing and raging
he thinks no one understands
he feels trapped in this house full of women
where are the sons he'd plan

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