

De-icing the plane

by [Donna Pucciani](#) in the [January 26, 2010](#) issue

A small black truck huddles
behind one wing, buried in a shroud

of smoke. Exhaust fumes? fire?
No. A cloud of detergent

billows over the plane. When every suitcase
is stowed, every seat belt buckled,

and the runways plowed, the black truck
sidles up again, the airport's winter "familiar."

The silver bird, with floury faces ovalled
on its side, slithers into a blizzard, hugely blind.

No mincing steps, no Lot's wife here.
One hesitation could mean death

ablaze on a snowy superhighway. Everyone
prays, "Up, up," to the engine's crescendo,

like sparrows sudsed in a birdbath
just before flight.