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## THE LIBERATED SONNET

Old Shakespeare was a chauvinistic wimp  
Who played most foul with done-wrong maids and wives.  
Deliberate and crass, he slipped a crimp  
In all his biased roles of female lives.  
His churlish answers to their puckered throes  
Like "Get thee to a nunnery," mocked truth  
And worthiness; he reveled in their woes.  
His ghost be plagued and plagiarized forsooth!

He bowdlerized, victimized girls with verve,  
Made 'em losers and gofers, goofers, all.  
The few he permitted a bit of nerve  
Found themselves spondeed on masculine gall.

I refuse to confirm the final bane  
Of his namesake form; I will not contain  
My righteous rant in gilded gelded couplet.  
I'm out to reform his metric quintuplet.

My wrath will not be bound, my spleen is full  
Of sand, and furry-- trocheed by a male.  
Julie skips Act IV in the latest tale.

No more sexist machinations and chicane.  
No more will I endure a macho Moor or Dane.  
No more inversions or half-rhymed aspersions.  
Poetic justice has to come--

Observe my liberated thumb!

## THE STAR SALESMAN

I'm native to this territory's scene  
Like mini-calculators, cabs and booze.  
I sprawl the king-size hotel bed and stare,  
My all-wool alter ego hangs alert,  
Fresh pressed and waiting for the morning's cue.  
My forty dollar name-designer tie  
Most likely has a spot that must be sponged  
Before I sleep. My Gucci shoes are shined  
For each rehearsed approach. But there's no role  
For sweet success tomorrow. Or next week.

A dozen times a month I play this lead--  
Instead of hotdogs, dine on haute cuisine.  
The bottom line is (How I hate that line!)  
Our customers aren't clapping for our number.  
However primed and powdered or threadbare  
They make it sound, their script says NO, a word  
Of lead and ice that lodges in soft parts  
Beneath my vest, attacking gourmet spoils.  
(I'm sure you note the comic undertones  
That permeate this neo-classic farce.)  
Still, I provide expected locomotion  
For this fine costume to complete the plot,  
To make the entrance and escort the client  
To lunch, silk lining iridescent wit,  
Lapels well-tailored with sincerity,  
Pants creased with confidence. Bright anecdotes  
Emerge from pockets, practiced protocol  
And uptown jokes, a little charge card magic--

Then when the show plays out, the wound-up mime  
Propels the props to yesterday's airport.  
And there this woven retinue, almost  
Adept enough to give its own performance  
Will go inanimate back in the plane,  
At last unfolding in home's terminal  
To wait in line in Ma Bell's crowded alley,  
And from the slept-in depths yield change enough  
To call-- report the bust to amateur  
Directors of these high-camp one-act flops--  
And maybe learn I don't still head the cast.

## ON MAKING THE RIVER AN OLD MAN

The river was an athlete sprinting south,  
A whistling boy with rhythmic summer stride.  
The settlers drew cool sweetness from his mouth,  
And made themselves spectators on his side.  
Efficiently he handled rain and thaw;  
He grew their wheat and cotton into fame.  
His flanks became a city; all who saw  
Made plans to say, and daily, others came.  
Pure drinking-- mallards-- trout-- were not enough.  
Machines re-routed him, they built a dam.  
They stole his power, dumped their poison-stuff,  
Then cursed him for the filth where once they swam.  
Now reeking by, a progress refugee,  
He seeks a nameless burial at sea.

## THE ANSWERING - A Sequel to Browning's Evelyn Hope

Because no one has ever spoken  
Back from here, we've all supposed  
This colding seal remains unbroken,  
This ancient passage always closed.  
If only you who think I died  
Could know this is a sweet exchange,  
Could know how boundaries fade inside  
The spectrum's unimagined range!

You never would have come to me  
Had I remained a normal length  
In mortal phase. Oh, can you see  
The structured weave, the narrow strength  
Of patterns granting us a place  
In that frame's weft? A giddy girl,  
A proper gentleman of grace  
In middle years allowed to purl

Into the fabric of acceptance?  
Not while I lived, but only after,  
Could you speak this without the chance  
Of shock, rebuke, or even laughter.  
Like you, I never dared express  
My secret. Silly child, you might  
Have thought. But by this leaf you press  
Into my hand, we will unite.

Don't grieve, my dear, your words are not  
Earthbound. I hear your lover's heart  
With mine and don't despair our lot.  
New dimensions reweave my part  
As they will yours at your last breath.  
The cycling portals pivot and spin  
On far-off stars that hinge on death--  
An old wronged term that means begin.

And by your token I transmit  
My pledge through leaf-veined stillness;  
We'll meet renewed, a better fit  
With time, my touch free of chillness.  
It's fitting that my name was Hope--  
Please never abandon its muffled call  
No matter how long transition's scope.  
Here, time is nothing; love is all.

## OBLIQUE RHYME FOR THE GARDEN WE CAN'T FORGET

Having found it by being lost  
I don't know if we can ever go back.  
A gardener yourself, this won't bore you, at least.  
Actually, we were following an antler-shedding buck.  
By the time we picked up the left side of his regal rack  
we'd wandered to an unknown spot  
overgrown with corruption and the stinging reek  
of grotesque excrescence with the breath of spite  
and rot. We fled that oozing nightmare  
but just as in a terror dream, each step  
was hobbled by conspiracies of roots and mire.  
Hulking forms of fungus made us stoop  
as they reached to slime our hair.  
Scratched and gasping, we came to a clearing;  
fog isolated us, but we could hear  
frantic groans and thrashes declaring  
same animal (likely the buck) was trapped  
in that hideous bog. The mist began to disappear.  
Our feet stopped sinking. Then we tripped  
on stones fallen from an old wall in disrepair.  
When we stood and raised our eyes  
lilacs surrounded us. A heart-shaped leaf  
brushed my face. Our lungs filled with ease;  
sweetness cleansed our tainted mouths. Allness of life  
combined iris purpling together with asters. Sky-shine  
laced petals and panicles, stippled the moss-napped floor  
with sueded negatives of sun. Iridescent sheen  
-on shades of cinnabar and carnelian in a flower  
never seen before drew us ahead. Wherever  
we turned was beauty: Rhododendrons of maroon and coral,  
thornless roses, a night-blooming cereus by day. Over  
and under florescence we moved, accompanied by a chorale  
of posing birds. There were no paths, just solid bloon,  
yet our feet walked unimpeded. Nothing was random or wild  
but there was no pattern or restriction-- only sublime  
existence, glory of being, natural but willed.  
The master gardener left no trace of rake, pruning shears,  
no shriveled calyx, mulch or stakes to mar perfection.  
Maybe we'll find it again-- hidden behind old shores--  
But of this much we're sure, he and I-- Eden wasn't fiction.

## Haiku

gray December day  
gray squirrels rustling dead leaves  
gray stone at your grave

sanctified relics  
two flies imbedding amber  
dealer doubling the price

## CUTTING A FINGER ON OBSIDIAN - to Georgia O'Keeffe

Searching,  
plodding in sand-filled shoes  
through shimmers of heat,  
we never met.  
Yet I knew you, Georgia,  
in veinous ways--  
in behind-the-eyes ways  
where light strikes  
mirrors in the secret vaults  
of knowing.

Exclaiming aloud and alone  
when the desert showed me its bones,  
its spiny life-- still and green  
or sidewinding,  
I knew you.

We passed at angles on the parallax  
of light out on Hogarth's curve  
blown beige and almost bare--  
palimpsest for colors and shapes,  
some knee-skinning, some cheek-soft,  
seeping in and out of each other  
under the mallet of light.

You are willful and wild  
as a spirit hawk. You are  
lava glass trapping fire  
beneath conchoidal wrinkles.

You are hands brushes eyes  
no longer peeling light,  
feeling its pulse,  
shedding it like snakeskin  
to dry and iridesce on canvas--  
but still living  
where I know you.

## HE MAKING OF AN ANGEL

Walking the lush green canopy of the Peruvian rainforest beneath his wings, Carl Mortenson used to imagine the tall vertical spikes it concealed. "Telephone pole jungle," bush pilots called it. A plane could plunge out of sight and never reach the ground. If the only engine failed, there was no alternative. "Even if a pilot lived through the crash, he'd probably never get out of the jungle alive, in spite of all the survival training," says Carl.

During the 50s and 60s as a missionary pilot with Jungle Aviation and Radio Service (JAARS), the air arm of Wycliffe Bible Translators, Carl was also well-acquainted with other problems: Heavily loaded take-offs and landings on short, uneven, sometimes rocky and muddy airstrips. And trying to decide whom or what to leave behind when the cramped cargo space was full. "Light single-engine aircraft are used because that's about all that can get into those primitive places. There's never been a plane that was really right for the job," he says. "I believe God meant for me to change that. I believe that's why He spared my life. Twice, in fact. The first time I was just a kid. My appendix ruptured and there weren't any wonder drugs back then. I had peritonitis and a long bout with other infections besides. A couple of times the doctors told my parents I wouldn't live through the night. When I made it-- after nine months and five operations-- I was sure the Lord had a reason. But at the time I figured, well, maybe He wants me to preach. Later I realized I wasn't cut out for the pulpit."

The second time was shortly after his arrival in Peru with JAARS. He was stricken with bulbar polio. He knew if he lived he would likely be paralyzed and confined to an iron lung. One was wheeled into his hospital room. He stared at it. "I told the Lord I'd rather die than live that way but if He still had some use for me, I'd accept His will. I knew He'd led me there, but I thought He might've changed His mind. Whatever His answer, I was sure He wouldn't abandon me." Six months later, Carl Mortenson passed his flight physical.

But all the while he was in the hospital, he was designing an airplane in his head: A twin engine job that would be the answer to a missionary's prayers: STOL (short take-off and landing) capabilities. Easy repair and maintenance in the field. More cargo-passenger space. And that life-saving second engine.

In 1965, with no engineering experience, he put his design on paper and named his plane the Evangel. Eventually, eight of them were built by a small corporation. All but one are still in service. But the company dissolved, and production ended with three orders unfilled. In spite of disappointment and discouragement, Carl began to understand that the Evangel was just a forerunner. There was much about it that he knew he could improve. "The truth is, God wouldn't let me quit. Newer aerodynamic



technology had come along-- like full-span flaps for maximum lift, spoilers instead of ailerons to control roll. Besides, a more attractive appearance was needed. The Evangel was a boxy workhorse. Streamlining also boosts efficiency."

Wycliffe eventually granted Carl and his wife an extended leave of absence and in 1972 the successor began to take shape on his drawing board. Over 950 drawings and 11,500 hours of engineering went into this first and most tedious step. It was completed Christmas night, 1976, and presented by the whole family-- Carl, his wife, Alice, sons, Edward, Evan, and Daniel, and daughters, Evangeline and Betsy-- as a gift to God for His use. "Without their help, devotion and sacrifices-- all the things they did and did without-- I couldn't have done any of this," Carl says humbly.

What he has done-- mostly in his basement, garage and laundry room-- is to proceed from piles of paper to ribs, dies, moulds, angles, jigs and a fuselage of aluminum and fiberglass which have materialized into an airplane called the Angel. "Angels are God's messengers to mankind," says Carl. "This plane is being developed specifically to spread God's Good News to those 'uttermost parts of the earth.' Cheaper, faster and more safely than ever before. Mission outposts are often hundreds of miles from the supply base. In Peru, the nearest is 90, the farthest is 600. The average range of a single-engine light plane is 350 miles. The Angel can fly 1600 miles without refueling. It cruises at 200 mph. It can carry over a ton of cargo, eight people or four 55 gallon drums. It can land and take off in 600 feet. The missionary's air isn't any rougher than other pilots' but his landings sure are. So the Angel's landing gear is designed to handle soft ground conditions, keep the wheel from caking with mud, and to deflect rocks. No other light multi-engine plane being produced has all these features."

Carl's youngest son, Dan, who has taken over correspondence and public relations says passionately, "The Angel's first priority is safety. When a missionary pilot is killed, even if he's alone, it's not just one life and a plane and Bibles or supplies that are lost. It's all the training and time that went into his being there-- and worse, all the people who may be lost forever before he can be replaced to deliver the means for saving them. Also there are still many areas that have Sager. Beet reached because they're so remote. The Angel can get there. That's why this project is so important."

Funding comes from donations to the King's Engineering Fellowship in Orange City, Iowa where the Mortensons live and work on the Angel, and the "Back To The Bible Broadcast" in Lincoln, Nebraska. The largest donors have been missionary pilots themselves. Some have given many hours of labor as well.

Lack of manpower was a constant problem from the beginning. Periodic reports had to be made to the Federal Aviation Authority

for certification. And always the need for money. "Airplanes are like pelicans," Carl often says, "they come with big bills." His sons were good help but they had education to complete and also had to work at paying jobs. "But each time things reached the impossible stage, the Lord provided-- more money, and sometimes special people for short periods-- a retired aeronautical engineer from American Rockwell, an interested Pan Am pilot, another pilot-mechanic from JAARS between assignments, a retired electrical engineer, college kids, even a highschooler-- they all put in much appreciated work. Whatever we needed most, always arrived."

Illinoisian Douglas Muir, one of the early volunteer hands says, "It was a pleasure working with Carl. He was so patient with me-- teaching me what I had to know before I could be of help. I admire his stick-to-itiveness. Most people couldn't have continued with anything so demanding."

On Good Friday, 1979, the Angel's 40 foot, 600 pound wingspan was hauled outside for a photograph. It was a joyful occasion because the most difficult part of the plane had been built along with the tooling for future production.

At last a local builder, a financial co-op, plumbing and electrical tradesmen, the use of equipment, all came together as a team for constructing a hangar-shop at the airport for completion of the Angel and its descendants when certification is complete. Carl turned from aeronautics to carpentry. In snow and below zero weather, the long awaited workplace became reality. In 1982, Merle Brown, a retired pilot-mechanic from New Tribes Mission joined the team as a regular. "Brownie's our maintenaince crew chief and walking mechanical reference system," Dan announces proudly.

In January 1984, the FAA cleared Angel for flight testing. All experimental aircraft are full of bugs. Even big manufacturers with large engineering staffs sometimes lose their planes and crews during flight testing. The Mortensons asked for special prayers for safety, skill and good judgement. They also prayed for (and received) good runway conditions-- no icing, no deep snowbanks on either side. Many short, low take-offs and landings were necessary for checking stability and controlability. Carl says First Chronicles 4:10 (Living Bible) summed up their feelings: "Oh, that you would wonderfully bless me and help me in my work; please be with me in all that I do, and keep me from all evil and disaster!"

The Angel flew. Of course there were problems, but it flew. With Carl's oldest son, Ed, in his final year at Iowa State University, they were able to use ISU's wind tunnel to select a better design for the nacelle, the fiberglass skin enclosing each engine. The new shape increased speed. "Every improvement will benefit missionary Angels in the future through many years of service, This is what drives us," says Carl.

When Ed graduated from Iowa State, his professors voted him the most likely to succeed as a design engineer. In spite of the highly paid opportunities available, he elected to invest his talents in the Angel. "So instead of making the most money, I'll make the least," he smiles. "But this is the job and these are the people I love. I don't feel I'm making any sacrifice at all."

"None of us is in it for the bucks," says Carl. "This is God's project. The plane should have commercial appeal in Alaska and the developing countries. All such sales will subsidize more missionary Angels. We'll be able to provide a free missionary plane for each four or five planes sold on the general market. That's why we're keeping it a simple do-it-yourself fellowship. No stockholders, no corporate structure. Any profits will be passed on to fly more Angels to more people who don't know Christ."

Carl's middle son, Evan, has been his most continuous right hand, and is now the test co-pilot. His future ministry will be as instructor to missionary users of the plane. "I've learned persistence from Dad and have grown in faith through his example. God's direction in this has been reinforced now and again but those in-between times can seem blurred. Still, Dad's vision is always clear."

Last November as Carl and Evan put Angel through some of its paces, a severe rudder flutter caught them by surprise: "We were shaking violently," Carl recalls. "I had chopped the throttles but the nose pitched up about 80 degrees in half a second, shot up 1,000 feet in 4 seconds, and the left engine quit! The accelerometer registered 6.5 Gs. Then the shaking stopped and we were amazed to see the wings were still with us. We couldn't see the tail and didn't know what we had to work with or what would stay with us. For a few long seconds we fully expected to roll over and dive straight into the ground. You can imagine how blessed we felt as we gently recovered and found the plane was actually flying quite well. Maybe the Lord sent real angels to support us during that violent maneuver! We made a routine single-engine landing. When we inspected the plane we discovered the top of the rudder had broken above the hinge and folded over, letting its heavy balance weight flutter. Nothing was wrong with the left engine. I had inadvertently hit the feathering control when I grabbed the throttles during the shaking. We had no damage except for a few easily repaired skin wrinkles-- the plane's," Carl grins. "Again we think God was saying He had more for us and the Angel to do. So that's what we're doing. At that point we re-designed the rudder."

Carl Mortenson is 53, a low key man with blue eyes, a warm smile and an incurable fondness for puns, spoonerisms and tongue twisters. He's also single-minded, or as his family says, stubborn. Does he ever wonder if he's crazy? Get disgusted? Make wrong decisions? "Sure, but like the psalm says, the Lord

preserves the simple," he chuckles. "And yes, I do get frustrated when we run out of money and everything grinds to a halt. Cash flow is a wearer-downer. But God's clock is different. Sooner or later He always moves His people to respond."

"Dad's work motto is: Do it. Do it right. Do it right now!" says Dan. "But he also loves music, softball, humor and making funny noises. The humor is never far away. He and Mom are just two ordinary people who have given themselves completely to God's service. And because of that they have a very fulfilling life."

Carl's wife, Alice, says, "People are always asking me what it's like to live with an airplane. But we've done it so long it seems perfectly normal to us. Oh, I get impatient to get things repaired around the house. Here's all this mechanical know-how and I can't get a lamp fixed! But planes have always been part of the picture. Carl was rebuilding old planes when we married. He donated a rebuilt Stinson to JAARS in Ecuador and we delivered it On our way to Lima."

Does she worry when her husband and sons are flying an experimental aircraft? "No," she answers softly. "I trust God. He's demonstrated His presence and His will in this many times."

The Mortensons believe one of the things that keeps them unified is their suppertime devotional. Every family member takes a turn at leading it. Carl also established a tradition of daily devotions in the shop.

The prototype Angel is now ready for structural testing, the last requirement. A duplicate airframe must be built and tested to destruction in the shop for final FAA certification for production. It will be a cost-intensive phase. "Recently an executive from Cessna told me that no company would consider designing and building a new aircraft for less than \$15 million on hand, not including production tooling which TKEF already has. To date, The King's Engineering Fellowship has spent only half a million. To us that seems like a lot." Carl sighs and poses a question that's more of a statement. "How dare we expect to finish a task like this? But we do, you know. There's only one way. With God's help. Look how far we've come! But it's not what we've done-- we're just instruments in His hands. We've had hundreds of people praying for us all these years. And hundreds of people making donations large and small. We've never been alone. Prayer is so vital. One of our Supporters once mentioned that she'd been especially burdened to pray for us on a certain day. Turned out it was the day Evan and I almost crashed with the rudder glitch."

The target date for going into production is Christmas of 1988. Some say it's impossible. He's heard that word before. But Carl Mortenson's faith has passed all its flight tests and there's still a twinkle in his eye.