

WRIGHT BROS.



## WINGING IT

Two brothers scanned the cold front stalled northeast.  
Wind stung their cheeks, they tasted briny grit.  
Not promising at all, and yet their blood  
Was humming yes! --their bones agreeing, genes  
Evolved beyond the wax and feather stage,  
The Icarus condition now afire  
Inside a circuit rider's gangling sons.

Here where a continental splinter spared  
The Carolina coast the punishment  
Of privateering seas and vaults of sand,  
Where Neptune's aviary wintered, bred,  
A new breed waited for its fledging time.  
No longer cold pretender, now a bird,  
Warm-blooded thirst for fuel in its crow.

The wind increased as Orville thought of past  
Debacles-- men he held in awe, who knew  
Much more, and yet they clung to principles  
Now proven false if he could dare believe  
His own. He thought how Wilbur's first box made  
The Bankers laugh: A kite, a clumsy toy  
To lift a man and let him guide it down.

Then came a larger one. They set it free--  
No lines to grounded hands-- a managed arch  
Responsive to their afterthought of rudder,  
And shifting body weight. Its shallow glide  
Was like a petrel's outspread, unflapped wings,  
Its shadow low, sometimes unbirdlike, skewed--  
Its landing more an unexpected stall.

The wind twanged wires and ribs, honed expertise  
On subtleties of air, its sudden whims.  
"Good lads but daft--" The Bankers winked and watched  
The brothers sweat two summers on the beach.  
One day a wizened fisherman had warned:  
"You Wright boys had your triumph. Sailed the sky  
Like seamen rolling combers in a skiff.

"It's time you set your minds on solid things  
More worthy of your labors back at home."  
And in their cluttered shop when flight seemed doomed,  
An artist's misbegotten fiction/farce,  
Those words were added drag on Orville's hope.  
Yet he, uncured romanticist, would spark  
Once more the re-ignition of them both.

(cont.)

GLENN HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

Winging It 3.

It vindicated its design, its name.  
It bullied air and arced the emptiness,  
Its altitude eight-hundred-fifty feet  
For half a mile, a whole lifetime of heights  
Above the ancient shore of Hatteras,  
Above the tossed-up caps, the guardsmens' shouts,  
Two wide-eyed Dayton "boys" sure of the dream.

The world, not sure of much, did not yet feel  
The power of a powered airplane's rise,  
The impact of those landings on the sand.  
And even now would anyone retract  
That triumph and its sum of aftermaths?  
One day at Kitty Hawk, man overrode  
That most resented pull. And here below

Would never be the same.

--Glenna Holloway

Dear Mr. Gotera:

Due to time constraints, Sally suggested I email or fax this.  
Library computers were full so am faxing. Call me collect:  
630/983-5499 with your decision please. Thank you!

Today his optimism soared again  
In spite of Wilbur's big Ohio frown.  
The coast guard station men came out to help,  
No longer snickerers, but not convinced.  
So many things gone wrong, so many times.  
The shapes, the shafts, the theories of lift.  
Just yesterday the half-tamed hawk had failed

When guards helped pulley Flyer up to crown  
The hill-- and Orville's hand lay on his dream,  
Its tactile substance thrumming, taut and sound--  
Except it blundered down and broke a skid.  
Yet now with gawkers gone-- today-- today  
Could unchain history from gravity,  
Could free man from the limits of his grounds...

Fresh winds concaved the dunes as Orville prayed,  
An upturned-head, an unclosed-eyes petition.  
Then Wilbur slowly nodded, yanked his cap  
And hurried up the strand where Flyer stood  
Repaired, improved from yesterday's attempt,  
Impatient to perform its starring role:  
A hulking hawk with wings of forty feet.

Old Bankers stirred fish stew and mended nets.  
Some picked their teeth and talked of changing tides.  
Out on its tracks, the bird was warm, intent  
On lifting its own weight with man along  
To hold it true. And Orville mounted, prone,  
The nascent species trembling to be loosed  
Upwind, his leanness part of Flyer's form.

The hybrid, flesh and fabric, wire and oil,  
Left wooden rails and climbed its element  
As startled gulls veered upward from its path.  
And high as they fled, cheers went higher still.  
Eleven seconds--twelve! Amid the praise  
The floating apparition traded sky  
For land again. But seconds were enough.

As Orville grinned, his brother ran to meet  
The clumsy crate he rode. To take his turn  
To keep the noisy dream aloft, inhale  
Its fumes, extend its reach, exceed the the time.  
Twice each, the brothers broke an earthly bond.  
Each test was higher, longer than the last  
Until almost a minute Flyer flew.

(cont.)



WINGING IT

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His own. He thought how Wilbur's first box made  
The Outer Bankers laugh-- a kite, a toy  
To lift a man and let him guide it down.

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No lines to grounded hands-- a managed arch  
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And shifting body weight. Its shallow glide  
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The brothers sweat two summers on the beach.  
One day a wizened fisherman had warned:  
"You Wright boys had your fun. Y'sailed the sky  
Like seamen rollin' combers in a skiff.

"It's time to set your minds on solid things  
More worthy of your labors back at home."  
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Those words were added drag on Orville's hope.  
Yet he, uncured romanticist, would spark  
Once more the re-ignition of them both.

(cont.)

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**FAX**

MAIL BOX ETC.

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From: G. HOLCOWAY

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# FAX



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Date: 5/28/03

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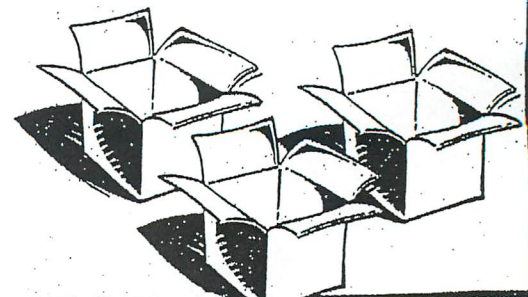
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Today his optimism soared again  
 In spite of Wilbur's big Ohio frown.  
 The coast guard station men came out to help,  
 No longer snickerers, but not convinced.  
 So many things gone wrong, so many times.  
 The shapes, the shafts, the theories of lift.  
 Just yesterday the half-tamed hawk had failed

When guards helped pulley Flyer up to crown  
 The hill-- and Orville's hand lay on his dream,  
 Its substance taut and sound, a-thrum with life--  
 Except it blundered down and broke a skid.  
 Yet now with gawkers gone-- today-- today  
 Could unchain history from gravity,  
 Could free man from the limits of his grounds...

Fresh winds concaved the dunes as Orville prayed,  
 An upturned-head, an unclosed-eyes petition.  
 Then Wilbur slowly nodded, yanked his cap  
 And hurried up the strand where Flyer stood  
 Repaired, improved from yesterday's attempt,  
 Impatient to perform its starring role:  
 A hulking hawk with wings of forty feet.

Old Bankers picked their teeth and mended nets.  
 Some talked of changing tides and winter gales.  
 Out on its tracks, the bird was warm, intent  
 On lifting its own weight with man along  
 To hold it true. And Orville mounted, prone,  
 The nascent species trembling to be loosed  
 Upwind, his leanness part of Flyer's form.

The hybrid, flesh and fabric, wire and oil,  
 Left wooden rails and climbed its element  
 As startled gulls veered upward from its path.  
 And high as they fled, cheers went higher still.  
 Eleven seconds--twelve! Amid the praise  
 The floating apparition traded sky  
 For <sup>land</sup> earth again. But seconds were enough.

As Orville grinned, his brother ran to meet  
 The clumsy crate he rode. To take his turn  
 To keep the noisy dream aloft, inhale  
 Its fumes, extend its reach, exceed the the time.  
 Twice each, the brothers broke an earthly bond.  
 Each test was higher, longer than the last  
 Until almost a minute Flyer flew.

(cont.)



It vindicated its design, its name.  
 It bullied air and arced the emptiness,  
 Its altitude eight-hundred-fifty feet  
 For half a mile, a whole lifetime of heights,  
 Above the ancient shore of Hatteras,  
 Above the tossed-up caps, the shouts ~~of~~ guardsmen's  
 And the <sup>wide-eyed</sup> Dayton "boys" below-- sure of the dream.

The world, not sure of much, did not yet feel  
 The power of a powered airplane's rise,  
 The impact of those landings on the sand.  
 Yet even now would anyone retract  
 That triumph and its sum of aftermaths?  
 One day at Kitty Hawk, man overrode  
 That most resented pull. And here below

Would never be the same.  
 The straining tether snapped and fell away;  
 Perhaps it never was in human hands.

December 17, 1903

WINGING IT

The brothers scanned the cold front stalled northeast.  
Not promising at all, and yet their blood  
Was humming yes! their bones agreeing, genes  
Evolved beyond the wax and feather stage,  
The Icaros infection now afire  
Inside a traveling cleric's progeny.

Impatient on a coastal splinter sparing  
Carolina's shore from Neptune's wrath  
Where his own aviary wintered, bred,  
A new breed waited for its fledging time:  
No more a cold pretender, now a bird,  
Warm-blooded thirst for fuel in its crawl.

The wind increased as Orville thought of past  
Debacles, men he held in awe, who knew  
Much more, and yet they clung to principles  
Now proven false if he could dare believe  
His own. He thought how Wilbur's first box made  
The Outer Bankers laugh: A kite, a toy

To lift a man and let him guide it down.  
Then came a larger one. They set it free,  
No lines to grounded hands, a managed arch  
Responsive to the afterthought of rudder,  
Shifting body weight. Its shallow glide  
Was like a petrel's outspread unflapped wings.

"Good lads but daft:" The Bankers winked and watched  
The brothers sweat two summers on the beach.  
One day a wizened fisherman admonished:  
"You Wright boys had your fun, you've sailed the sky  
Like seamen rolling combers in a skiff.  
It's time you set your minds on solid things."

Home in their cluttered shop when flight seemed doomed,  
An artist's misbegotten fiction/farce,  
Those words were added drag on Orville's props.  
But he, the uncured optimist, would spark  
Once more the re-ignition of them both.  
Today he revved his faith to soar again.

The coast guard station men came out to help,  
No longer snickerers, but not convinced.  
So many things gone wrong, so many times.  
The shapes, the shafts, the theories of lift.  
Just yesterday the half-tamed hawk had failed  
When guards helped pulley Flyer up the hill.

It blundered down Kill Devil, broke a skid.  
But now with gawkers gone-- today-- today  
Could unchain history from gravity,  
Could free man from the limits of his place.  
Fresh winds concaved the dunes as Orville prayed,  
An upturned-head, an unclosed-eyes petition.

Now Wilbur slowly nodded, yanked his cap  
And hurried up the strand where Flyer stood,  
A hulking hawk with wings of forty feet,  
Repaired and ready to perform its part.  
As Orville's hands made contact with his hope,  
He felt it thrum with life, its substance sound.

The Barkers stirred fish stew and mended nets.  
Out on its tracks, the hawk was warm, intent  
On lifting its own weight with man along  
To hold it true. And Orville mounted, prone,  
The trembling species keening to be loosed  
Upwind, his leanness part of Flyer's form.

The hybrid, flesh and fabric, wire and oil,  
Left wooden rails and climbed its element  
As startled gulls veered from the creature's path.  
And high as they fled, cheers went higher still.  
In flight for thirteen seconds-- but enough!  
It vindicated its design, its name.

Young Orville grinned, his brother ran to meet  
The clumsy crate he rode. To take his turn  
To keep the wing-warped dream aloft, inhale  
Its fumes, extend its reach, exceed the time.  
Twice each, the brothers broke an earthly law  
Until almost a minute Flyer flew.

It bullied wind and claimed the empty air,  
Its altitude eight-hundred-fifty feet  
For half-a-mile above the ancient shore  
Of Hatteras, above the tossed-up caps  
And shouts of coast guards plus one Dayton "boy,"  
Half-owner of the omen in the sky.

December 17, 1903

--Glenna Holloway

## THE KITE MAKERS

The Outer Bankers watched the brothers sweat  
Two summers on the beach. "Good lads but daft,"  
They said. One wizened fisherman advised:  
"You Wright boys had your fun, you sailed the sky  
Like seamen rolling combers in a skiff.  
It's time you set your minds on solid things."

Home in their cluttered shop when flight seemed doomed,  
An artist's misbegotten fiction/farce,  
Those words were added drag on each device.  
Now back on Hatteras, the brothers cranked  
Their faith again as Orville thought of past  
Debacles, men he held in awe, who knew

Much more, and yet they clung to principles  
Now proven false if he could dare believe  
His own. He thought how Wilbur's first box made  
The Bankers laugh: a clumsy kite, a toy  
To lift a man. The next was larger, free  
Of grounded lines, responsive to a rudder.

Today their craft, their fueled Flyer waited,  
A hulking hawk with wings of forty feet,  
Repaired from yesterday's mistakes, impatient  
To make the watching skeptics crane and squint.  
As Orville's hands made contact with his dream,  
He felt it thrum with life, its substance sound.

It lifted him through cold December sky;  
It vindicated its design, its name.  
Two startled gulls veered from the creature's path,  
Yet high as they fled, cheers went higher still.  
Twice each, the brothers broke with earthly law.  
And here below would never be the same.



## THE KITE MAKERS

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Not promising at all, and yet their blood  
Was humming yes, their bones agreeing, genes  
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Impatient on a coastal splinter sparing  
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Where his own aviary wintered, bred,  
A new breed waited for its fledging time:  
No more a cold pretender, now a bird,  
Warm-blooded thirst for fuel in its craw.

The coast guard station men came out to help,  
Past being snickerers, but not convinced.  
So many things gone wrong, so many times:  
The shapes, the shafts, the theories of lift.  
Just yesterday the half-tamed fowl had failed  
When guards helped pulley Flyer up the hill.

It blundered down Kill Devil, broke a skid.  
But now-- most gawkers gone-- today-- today  
Could unchain history from gravity,  
Could free man from the limits of his ground.  
Fresh winds concaved the dunes as Orville prayed,  
An upturned-face, an unclosed-eyes petition.

The locals stirred fish stew and mended nets.  
Out on its tracks, the bird was warm, intent  
On lifting its own weight with man along  
To hold it true. And Orville mounted, prone,  
The trembling species eager to be loosed  
Upwind, his leanness part of Flyer's form.

The hybrid, flesh and fabric, wire and oil,  
Left wooden rails and climbed. Then Wilbur took  
His turn to keep the wing-warped dream aloft,  
Inhale its fumes, extend its reach, exceed  
The time. Twice each, the brothers bullied wind  
Claimed empty air, and broke an earthly law.

And here below would never be the same.

The world, not sure of much, did not yet feel  
The impact of their landing on the sand,  
The power of a powered airplane's rise.  
But even now would anyone retract  
That triumph and its sum of aftermaths?

That day at Kitty Hawk, desire and will  
Produced the modern age. Man found the means  
To override that most resented pull.  
The straining tether snapped and fell away;  
Perhaps it never was in human hands.

--December 17, 1903

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The clumsy crate he rode. To take his turn  
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Until almost a minute Flyer flew.

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Once more the re-ignition of them both.

(cont.)



stamps / ash  
aspen / mile  
Tyne / well  
Valerian / harvest  
is

enough  
NOT  
LATEST



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It bullied air and arced the emptiness,  
Its altitude eight-hundred-fifty feet  
For half a mile, a whole lifetime of heights,  
Above the ancient shore of Hatteras,  
Above the tossed-up caps and shouts of guardsmen--  
The Dayton "boy" below--- sure of the dream.

The world, not sure of much, did not yet feel  
The power of a powered airplane's rise,  
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That triumph and its sum of aftermaths?  
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And here below would never be the same.

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Perhaps it never was in human hands.

December 17, 1903

GLENN HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

## BIRTHDAY AT KITTY HAWK

You've honored me with such a feast tonight!  
There's only been one birthday that was better.  
I wouldn't bore you with an old man's tale  
Except the major theme changed your lives too.

We Outer Bankers seldom leave our homes.  
Our roots are strong beneath old ways, old sands  
Where robber-winds and pirates left their marks.  
When I was only six, two strangers came  
To my stark world to build a giant box:  
"Fish trap," or "just a toy," the residents  
Guffawed at length, not always privately.  
The young mechanics didn't seem to mind,  
They even owned they'd been laughed at before.  
"Good lads, but daft," the Bankers nodded, smirked,  
And watched them sweat, a summer's novelty.

The box grew fat, the natives saw it was  
A kite, a straining fledgeling big enough  
To lift a man and let him guide it down.  
We folk had never seen a thing like that.  
And being lame, (my shattered foot had not  
Healed right) it narrowed life on narrow strands.  
The kite awakened me, transformed my dreams.  
I thought about it through the gritty gales  
That wintered gnashing, gnawing at the dunes.  
I wondered if the strangers would return  
When ocean air ran smooth on August shores.

The brothers did come back and rode again,  
A bigger kite this time, and set it free:  
No lines to grounded hands-- a managed arch  
Responsive to controls they had designed,  
Or shifting body weight. Their shallow glide  
Was like a petrel, outspread, unflapped wings--  
A shadow low and often skewed. My heart  
Would rise and pound like surf, my breath, my will  
Held them aloft when I was eight years old,  
And sure I'd fly someday the way they did--  
But higher than the brothers down from Dayton.

(cont.)

Bankers -  
capital "B"

"FLYER"

Dec. 17, 1903

FIRST flight of  
heavier than air craft

I lived from summer to summer afraid  
 My heros would give up. My ecstasy  
 Was not reflected in their farewell eyes.  
 I couldn't understand their lack of joy.  
 My mother said, "Good riddance, you don't need  
 Such wild ideas. Your lot is crabs and tides.  
 Your head's too cloudy now. You mind your chores."

But they returned to build a different bird,  
 The biggest yet, with new contours and tail.  
 Coast guardsmen helped to haul its hulking span  
 Atop Kill Devil's knob. One day I touched  
 The wing's tip when a helper slipped in sand.  
 The ribs and fabric dipped within my reach,  
 Within reality. I felt how taut  
 Yet flexible it was; it thrummed with life,  
 Vibrated with expectance, seemed to sing.

The brothers stayed a month. They changed the curves,  
 They changed the tail. They rode their half-tamed hawk  
 Beside the sound of sea and gull. The wind  
 Twanged on the wires, whooshed in between the top  
 And bottom wing. They honed their expertise  
 On subtleties of air and how to move  
 Their weight, the rudder and the vane to compensate  
 Its sudden whims. And then the shiny days  
 Were over, filed as fantasies. Perhaps  
 He didn't mean it when he said, "See you  
 Again, Jerome." The long-nosed one just grinned,  
 Held out his hand. His big Ohio grip  
 And face stayed vivid as the foam-white sun  
 That bleached the winter sky and all my hope.  
 Kill Devil Station guards kept warning me:  
 "Them Wright boys had their triumph." "Sailed the airs  
 Like seamen rolling combers in a skiff."  
 It's time they set their minds on solid things  
 More worthy of their labors back at home."

My hopes revived with warming blue. I posed  
 The longed-for silhouette against snow clouds.  
 With squinting eyes I fixed the image on  
 The dunes as summer slipped the fishing nets.  
 Sometimes I met the ferry, poked around  
 The brothers' shack blown down the beach, or sketched  
 Their kites. Rain slapped furled sails and fall sea oats.

I'd given up. And then I saw some smoke  
 Above the piney woods. I limped two miles.  
 Their camp was full of chains and spars, strange tools.  
 And while their supper cooked they studied plans.  
 New wings soon spread to forty feet. This time  
 There was a motor-- power for the bird  
 That couldn't flap against the pull of earth.

(cont.)



Small plagues and things that broke down at a glance,  
 A trip back home, a heavy toll of time--  
 As slow as Christmas. Christmas, though, was close.  
 They pulleyed christened Flyer up to crown  
 Kill Devil Hill. The guards helped where they could.  
 But soon it lay below, a fallen hawk,  
 Its foot in ruins. The Bankers all went home:  
 "A shame, but what could they expect?" They found  
 Me crying near the shed where Flyer slept,  
 And Wilbur said, "Aw son, it's just a skid.  
 Like you, we'll rise again. We're almost there!"

So some of the gawkers of Kitty Hawk  
 Didn't bother to watch next day. The guards  
 Were faithful even though they disbelieved.  
 And I was half afraid to go. I woke  
 To the sound of the motor's roar and thought  
 It wind at first. My foot had ached all night,  
 The sullen chill lodged in the bones and throbbed.  
 The morning looked the way I felt. No good  
 Could come of such a sky, my natal day.

But there on that dull plain, the hawk was warm  
 And champing to perform as was supposed--  
 To lift its own weight from its tracks, with man  
 To hold it true. And Orville mounted, prone,  
 The trembling species waiting to be born  
 In wind, his leanness part of Flyer's form.  
 Wind muted sounds: The roar, whine, pops, creaks, shouts.  
 The hybrid of flesh and metal and oil  
 Left its wooden rails, climbed its element  
 As startled terns veered from the creature's path.  
 And high as they fled, cheers went higher still.

Twice each, the brothers broke with gravity;  
 Each test was higher, longer than the last.  
 Each time, a small boy's heart outsoared the wings:  
 Such birthday gifts the world had never seen.  
 And when that day was done, the tall kitesmiths  
 Came over, guards and gawkers gone, the craft  
 Safe in its shed: "You brought us luck," they said.  
 And I told them, "I'm ten years old today.  
 So what if I can't run? I'm gonna fly!"

And fly I did, the early U.S. Mail;  
 I stunted, tested, instructed, designed,  
 The only pilot from the opening page.  
 Some things in my ninth decade I forget,  
 But nothing of the day that I turned ten,  
 And nothing of the men who built my world  
 Then hurled it miles above my hobbled one.

Kind friends, I'll rest now. Bless you for this night.