

WINGING IT

Two 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 circuit rider's gangling sons.

Impatient on a coastal splinter sparing
The Carolina 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 craw.

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 their afterthought of rudder
And 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 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."

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