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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 primped 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 iridescing 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-bloaming 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.

## THE 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 pi-

lots 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 dis-

couragement, Carl began to understand that the Evangel was just a

forerunner. There was much about it that he knew he could im-

prove. "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 engin-

eering 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 mission-

ary'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 Fellow-

ship 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 them-

selves. 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 en-

gineer 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.”

Illinoisan 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 elec-

trical 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 annonces

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 avaliable, 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

persistance 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 ac-

celerometer 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 decisons? "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 experi-

mental 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 pro-

duction. It will be a cost-intensive phase. "Recently an ex-

ecutive from Cessna told me that no company would consider de-

signing 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.