

## Runaway

By Donna and Mark Atwood

Trapped in a world of dreary despair,  
You sought refuge far away.  
Went on the run as if you committed theft,  
Sprinting off for the next flight,  
While hugging your luggage so tight,  
Because that's all you had left.

As the plane ascends, you look down,  
Over the city and houses as they turn to little things,  
Knowing that this is the only option.  
Like the aircraft, you begin to use your wings.

Soaring through the night, a red eye.  
Twelve hours pass, the descent starts.  
The sunrise is bright, you come to a stop.  
Touching down, landing to claim my heart.

We met, the sparks flew, the smiles formed,  
The painful past became a fleeting memory,  
And a new Time was being written,  
Full of joy and ache, the ups and downs.  
But little did I know we'd only last a chapter.

The fights overcame the love,  
And our new home started to fall apart.  
The kisses became shorter,  
The hugs were obstructed by air,  
Our conversations grew to none,  
And you had one foot out the door,  
Ready to resume "the run".

You are tempted to pursue your own exile,  
And that is when I knew we had come undone,  
Yet the very next morning I faked a smile,  
Cause I thought losing you, meant I'd be done.

My phony grin enticed you to stay and try,  
For, we took the vow binding us til we die,  
But this should not be our fate,  
So you whispered into my ear,  
The reason why you flew here,  
From lack of love, an abundance of hate.

Just like you couldn't stay with her,  
I fear it is my time to be the runaway,  
To flee from tyranny and be the voyager.  
So we can both find our love and home one day.

## **The Night Crows**

By Nancy Dickerson

I didn't hear them settle  
But the dogs barked toward the door.  
I peered outside the curtains  
Saw the snow and nothing more.  
The dogs were not convinced though  
And still paced around the room,  
So despite the dark and bitter cold  
We went out in the gloom.

I took a breath of frozen air  
Then stepped down from the porch.  
I scanned each way for signs of life,  
Saw nothing in my search.  
But, a whisper, then a murmur  
Then I heard a single cry,  
And in a frenzied lift-off  
Saw two hundred black crows fly.

They cawed and quarreled from their sleep  
And yelled insulting things.  
Pine branches sprung and shook the snow  
As they beat four hundred wings.  
They thundered like a freight train  
Roaring past along the tracks,  
Then circled like a cyclone  
Disappearing in the black.

The dogs looked up, then back at me  
And said, we told you so.  
I laughed at them and they went back  
To peeing in the snow.  
I don't know why they chose my tree  
But be that as it may,  
As quietly as they'd settled there,  
They noisily flew away.

## **The Courtship**

By Lynn Arthur Koch

Under May Day clouds  
a pair of swallows soar  
like melodies,  
in thirds,  
then sixths,  
then thirds again,  
evolving  
into visual counterpoint,  
an invention by Bach  
or God,  
etched with exquisite  
freedom and grace  
against the grey, white and blue  
of a warm spring afternoon.

## **Flight Planes with Anne Morrow Lindbergh**

I am taking off. I am finally off the ground  
With you, this after thinking I'd never fly  
Again. Never kiss another again. Around  
The tender bend of take-off we tiptoe, hats high  
And delicately flailing. Clear the aisle for our eyeglasses clinking  
Like a mixed drink, with my sweetened clothes disclosed—  
Dissolving, delinquent, uncontrollable rising and sinking—  
An indelible side step of marriage. Already disposed  
For flight, we wantonly want—then cut *out* the chase—to stop.  
We heartbeat to a standstill. No rush down the runaway frieze—  
On board a *future* plane, with *another* plan, we'll *top*  
This architect's flight laid out in thin air: No breeze,  
No down, no up, no yonder, no falling asunder.  
Attendants only—to above-cloud, wild-blue wonder.

\*Though Anne Morrow Lindbergh's 1929 marriage to world-renowned aviator Charles Lindbergh survived forty-some tumultuous years, we now know she twice bethfell in love with other men: French aviator-author Antoine de Saint-Exupery in 1939 and internist Dana W. Atchley in 1956.

Beth MacRae

**Cracked Eggs – Splintered Shells:  
Wisdom Gleaned from My Avian Neighbors  
By Bill Lee**

**(Dedicated to all who gaze into the sky  
And dream of soaring high!)**

**Before the dawn's sunlight warms dewy grass,  
The Birds' melody has greeted the new morn.  
From house, from nest, from under eaves,  
Avian have taken wing and are airborne.**

**Fledglings wait, rarely patiently, eyes wide  
Drinking in the new world that greets them.  
Sights and sounds and vibrations dazzle  
All is fresh and new, nothing is humdrum**

**Not long before, they had cracked the egg  
And splintered the shell seeking to flourish and fly.  
Now, as the Earth rotates through the Universe.  
It is Mom and Dad who protect and nourish.**

**Still, that time to fly is not today, so from their  
Precarious perch, like unsteady, unarmed sentries,  
Prepared to protect the world that is theirs –  
This spot on the eaves – denying others entries.**

**Soon, they too, will learn where and how  
To locate the best plants, insects, nuts, and seeds  
As they leave the nest, on fresh, untested wings,  
Flying over waters, trees, bushes and weeds.**

**But other birds pay them little mind and move  
About the garden, gathering nourishment.  
From feeder, tree, bush, and ground, it is survival:  
They do not need direction nor encouragement.**

**Robins, jays, and cardinals perform an aerial ballet  
With swallows and hummingbirds, and even crow.  
From perch-to-perch, through sapling and shrub,  
And man-made structures around the patio.**

**It is nature's way – the avian way.  
Elders will enlighten through example and display.  
Fledglings will adopt the teachings, or they will  
Not survive – one's either growing or going.**

Away from the garden, by the reeds in the pond,  
Fishing birds stand patiently placid . . . waiting.  
Now, with a sharp thrust, plunges deep into  
The green water . . . nothing but frustration.

With a head shake and a few slow, deliberate steps  
Neck cocked, head held high, body steadfast, erect  
Another, almost slow-motion step, head lowered,  
Eyes wide, open, tense . . . dive . . . breakfast!

Back at the garden, dawn shadows have shortened  
As the sun climbs deeper into the blue sky,  
The avian flock's attention has moved to grooming.  
Each specie seeming to take care to beautify.

It might be using the beak to rearrange the feathers  
And to remove an embedded bug or two.  
Or it may be just a dip into a water source  
For a rapid, thrashing shake to make do.

Back on the eaves, the hatchlings remain,  
Alert and enthralled by the activity and motion.  
Surely, nature has provided avian with the gift  
Of alertness and sensitivity to commotion.

Heads, twisting about, eyes scanning the horizon,  
Ears perked, fine-tuned to hear the quietest sound.  
Even a whisper of wind on a clear day  
Might cause the bird not to linger around.

From the ability to locate the right perch  
To hide and spy, to sense danger from a distance,  
To listen intently, to remain still, to take in all that  
Greets them, helps preserve their existence.

Between feeding, grooming, and staying alert.  
A bird need a spell to nap and rest.  
Each specie seems to have a special place and  
Unique way to be relived from being stressed.

Some stand erect with legs locked,  
Eyes closed, bill resting on breast.  
Others fold into a ball of feathers,  
While others retreat to a nest.

However, the rest takes its form,  
The flock is always vigilant of danger.  
Even in repose, low murmurs and grunts  
Keep all mindful to a possible stranger.

**But maybe the greatest lesson awaits:  
For dangling before all hatchlings is flight.  
They must grip their perch with anxiety  
Watching parents glide lift and then right.**

**Imagine what is going on in that little bird brain  
As he or she stands worryingly on the edge,  
Looking down, feeling gravity's pull.  
Now, imagine, stepping off the ledge.  
Luckily, the elders had taken the time  
To model the behavior and to train.  
Because certain life lessons can be harsh  
If you don't succeed – you won't do it ever again.**

**So from little hops and short, safe jumps,  
Springs the moment of truth and deed.  
Off the edge, into space . . . at once,  
Flapping fresh, unproven wings, you succeed!**

**But that step is for later. On this day,  
The little ones grasp the eaves edge and gaze out in awe.  
All around them is the Universe's grandeur  
Coming together like a massive, cosmic puzzle.**

**Looking above at the sun crossing the sky, then  
Sinking into the deep, black darkness of night  
With only the moon and scattered stars  
To illuminate the Earth around midnight,**

**The fledgling might pose the questions:  
Who am I? And why am I here, now,  
Amid these other avian creatures with  
All the Earth's abundance available, anyhow?**

**And why am I who I am? And others other?  
I don't share the wood duck's vivid hues,  
Nor the robin's red breast, the cardinal's  
Royal red, nor the boisterous jay's blues.**

**My neck is not long like the heron,  
Nor can I fish like the mighty eagle.  
My beak is shorter than the woodpecker's; and**

**Unlike a trumpet swan, I do not appear regal.**

**But, as the little one looked upon the world,  
A contentment filled his tiny birdie being.  
"I am who I am – the best version of myself!"  
For accepting one's self is immensely freeing.**

**I am ready for FLIGHT!**

## Flight of the Feathered Fliers

by John E. Lutz

Of strong wing and daring flight:

not only do they delight the ear with sweet melodic outpourings,  
but delight, too, the eye with their darting and sweeping, circling and soaring.

Theirs are lessons of freedom, power, and grace.

But none abounds apart and separate from myself as part of the drama of the wild. So why do the birds fly as they do?

flying is a means of transport, flitting from here to there,  
gadding about like busy politicians hustling from one neighborhood to  
another,  
soaring high to attain a wide lookout in search of food, or  
catching their prey on tireless wing,  
climbing a spiral staircase into the skies to clap at heaven's gate  
while adding songs in flight to the day's dawn and eve's twilight.

Patience.

Be still.

See their movement beyond.

Such variety in flight privileges me:

the eagle wheeling and gliding over mountain and stream; crows  
flying with unfaltering flapping;  
the phoebe's snapping, jerky path;  
a junco bolting with her fluttering white petticoat;  
swallows and nighthawks feeding on the fly;  
the chimney swift streaking by like a black arrow;  
vultures scanning their territory to find a waiting smorgasbord of carrion; the  
kingbird mincing and hovering as it tiptoes through the air;  
meadowlark and woodcock with festivity begotten by their mating instincts.

The flights of the feathered fliers embody labor and strain, but also finesse, ease, and purpose.  
Yet Nature isn't far away —

I can watch her closely right from my door:

a seeing eye and hearing ear can capture the play of the wild in one's own yard  
and garden.

I can choose to watch and listen. Or

not.

The drama of nature goes on with or without me:

it's played rapidly and is easily lost to one who camps next to the flickering  
electron.

I can open my door to read the book of nature.

Or I can reach into my pocket to scan electronic media.

A volume of live natural history is oft wasted to a flashing screen.

But why would I choose to miss the beauty and delight of the feathered fliers around and  
above?

## FIRST FLIGHT

by James Pfrehm

It was my first flight.  
And well— as things turned out  
It was the first of many flights.  
I remember it like it was yesterday.  
The smells, the sounds, the sights,  
In a brewery just outside of Portland  
On my twenty first birthday.  
Wait a minute—  
You didn't think I meant  
My first time on a plane...?  
No... That would be far too mundane.  
Because actually  
This poetic whimsy  
Is about delicious, fermented grain.  
Well, grains to be exact.  
Malted, roasted and mashed,  
Boiled from grist or tacky extract.  
In shades of amber, chocolate and honey,  
Those Malts of Munich, Pilsner and Sunny.  
I can still see it now!  
I raise the glass...  
Here it comes!  
The bitter sweet nectar  
flows over my gums.  
In cascades of brewed-up yummy  
Surging straight down the gullet  
And into my tummy.  
Mmm...  
Oh! Hello. Sorry about that.  
I got a little ahead of myself there...  
But please—come with me now,  
as I entreat you to hear  
about my first ever flight  
of scrumptious, artisan beer.  
As I already mentioned  
just a few moments ago,  
we need to go back some years  
To a woody watering hole,  
Just on the outskirts of Portland  
To a small-scale brewery that  
come to think of it  
Resembles the one in Cortland.  
There were no menus  
and they served no real food,  
but they did have fifteen different brews  
for every beer drinker's mood.  
There were beers in all colors of the rainbow.

With tastes of bitter, sweet, and sour,  
And incredible names I'll never forget,  
like Hop-Backed Cougar Pale  
and Wicked Riptide Power.  
And there I stood  
In such utter amazement,  
That I was barely able to follow  
the bartender's crucial first statement:  
"You can pick only six,  
And I'll arrange them here before you,  
Left to right and light to dark  
atop this artisan tray  
made from balsam bark."  
The first beer, well... it was more like water,  
wispy, pale and weak.  
The second smacked of honey,  
too sweet for me to drink.  
The third and fourth were bitter,  
From Citra, Simcoe and Chinook.  
Varieties of hops I'd never heard of  
before this flight I took.  
The second to last was the worst!  
It was peanut buttery something,  
Its aftertaste so dank,  
that it left my palate cringing.  
But the last one...  
Oh... the last one.  
I can even taste it still.  
It was a ginger watermelon lager  
By far the best of their swill.  
Now, I know what you're thinking... "Gingler Watermelon lager."  
"That sounds worse than all the rest!"  
But hey! Don't knock it till you try it,  
It just might please you best.  
And to this day my search goes on,  
For that single delectable draft.  
My Shangri La of beers,  
Brewed with the finest of craft.  
Maybe some day, I'll find it,  
As I did that auspicious night  
In the outskirts of Portland  
On my first incredible flight.

## **If They Only Knew**

by Linda Contento Schmidt

Flying on a big jetliner  
into my baby's arms --  
    can't we go any faster?

High above the clouds  
soaring far in space --  
    just like when he kisses me.

Staring out the window  
thinking of you --  
    bet they wonder  
why I'm wearing this silent smile --  
    if they only knew.

## **Absence of Flight**

**A gorgeous sunny day, like so many others, nothing unusual or odd  
So typical that it goes without notice, without awe or explanation  
Heavenly blue stretching endlessly from one horizon to the other  
An expanse so immense and spectacular that it's hard to imagine**

**Billowing puffy clouds, drifting silently along with the gentle winds  
Infinite cloud shapes, shifting and changing with each passing moment  
To be reimagined again and again by those who observe them  
Creative artistic impressions from the mind's eye view**

**An occasional muffled roar draws my eyes to peer upward  
Searching with captured curiosity to find the gleaming silver bullet  
Cruising effortlessly across the wide blue yonder  
Vapor trails slithering along, proving the pathways just taken**

**Jet after jet, ferrying their passengers to distant locations  
Traversing the open skyway to journey to locales far and wide  
Blue skies, crisscrossed by lingering ribbons of snowy white fluff  
As a variety of planes make their way to places unknown**

**When darkness arrives, and the wondrous night appears  
Twinkling white stars, sprinkled so finely across the blackness of space  
Are interspersed with flashing lights of travelers passing through  
Distant zooming planes, calling attention to their overhead flight**

Then came a September morning, when what's normal disappeared  
And jets were used as weapons, creating terror, absolute fear, lives lost  
Unbelievably, without understanding, twin towers came tumbling down  
Utter destruction, and the things we had known would never be the same

Precaution and fear took control of our skies  
And planes were all grounded, their flights all shut down  
The coming and going - so routine once before - came abruptly to an end  
And air travel was halted - a total and unnatural absence of flight

The sounds and the sights of the sky up above  
Were noticeably missing, and unsettling beyond compare  
The absence of flight created silence, so rare  
That listening to the quiet brought a disheartening nightmare

Search and rescue, exploration, recovery and collection  
Thousands of people moving, looking, listening, digging away endlessly  
Doing everything possible to remedy the situation, bring some closure  
To absolute human devastation, a war zone, like none witnessed before

After thorough investigation, with much time gone by  
The planes were permitted to once again fly  
The sight of distant carriers, high above our earthly heads  
Gave a semblance of normalcy returning to our existence

Thundering jets, thrusters engaged, climbing to altitude  
Flight lanes repopulated with reactivated planes  
Pulsing lights regularly illuminating the darkened skies  
Looking and seeming familiar, like a natural, everyday occurrence

We experienced the sounds of silence, no planes to take us far  
A world torn apart by violence and inhumanity, without rhyme or reason  
Our fears and trepidations justifiably on edge, forever more  
Yet, we needed so much to return to what we had known before

Who knew that those passing sounds from above with guiding lights  
Were so reassuring, so comforting to see and hear  
So important to our human nature, our emotional well-being  
But having an absence of flight made it ever so clear

Tom Steger

Why They Flee by Nancy Rehkugler

\*

Why do they take flight,  
By day or by night,  
Into a dark unknown?  
That is what I wondered, as I pondered.  
Would I flee, if it  
happened to be me?

\*

They flee for many reasons.  
In *El Salvador*, because of gangs  
recruiting members as young as nine.  
One fourth of all the citizens  
are victims of crime.  
The threats of violence are constant,  
The statistics are stark.  
Rarely would one venture  
outside after dark.  
17,000 Salvadorian children traveled alone,  
a perilous 2000 mile journey north,  
looking for a home.

\*

Flight from *Haiti* is a different tale-  
political instability,  
disasters of quake and flood,  
buried in mud, but mostly  
it is unbearable poverty  
that causes Haitians to flee.  
Hurricanes and cholera  
add to the misery.

\*

A brutal earthquake struck *Nepal*,  
At least ten thousand died.  
Now the young men leave their country—  
Go to Malaysia, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Dubai  
to work as laborers and send money home.  
So much destruction, so many killed--  
now that the young men have left;  
there's no one left to rebuild.

\*

From *El Savador, Honduras,*  
*Guatemala* they come--  
Overwhelming the migrant system,  
Looking for a better life,  
Less daily strife, a place that's safe  
hoping to work and earn their place.

\*

People flee *South Sudan*, a nation  
of unbearable pain,  
killings and torture--  
malnutrition and hunger.  
Into Ethiopia they flow,  
to Uganda they go,  
Mostly women and girls.

Could I flee, if this were me?  
There is one thing I know for sure.  
Parting with my children --  
I could never endure.

## **My Dream Flight**

By Doris Still

Mom says it's time to be sleeping  
Too early-or so it seems.  
She tucks me in and kisses me gently  
And wishes me sweetest of dreams.

I close my eyes-I fly through the sky  
Am I asleep or awake?  
There's one thing I know of the dreams that I've had  
I love this trip the best, that I take.

The stars look to me like bright ferris wheels  
And as they go round and around  
I see my house, my little white house  
How tiny it looks on the ground.

I like to polish the face of the sun  
Til it shines as if it were new  
Like a big orange ball, it would circle the sky  
Bringing sunshine and warmth, down to you.

I tumble and jump in soft, fluffy clouds-  
Surely this sort of fun is the best.  
The large crescent moon cradles me gently  
As I take a moment to rest.

Once in a while, after a storm,  
A rainbow will come into view.  
How I'd like to cut loose the soft colored ribbons-  
Like a kite, it would sail in the blue.

But when it's near morning and I must awake  
I say goodbye to my dreams up above  
I slide down a moonbeam and into the arms  
Of the mommy, dear mommy, I love.

## Transcendence

*(This poem is meant to be read from the bottom up.)*

Soaring

Into the Radiance

Wingless and Weightless

Ascends

My soul slips free

In the moment of the eternal now

With a prayer

Released

Away from the tumult and anomie in the valley below

Defying gravitational pull

Drawn ever upward toward the Mother Star

A Child flies a box-kite

As off on another hilltop

Seeking the portal for my spirit to take flight

Only a spring breeze and silence here

Embraced by Solitude

Scramble to the top of the high hill

To disentangle

Need to escape

Tentacles of cable news ensnare

Depressing

Martin Sweeney

## She Flew High in a Flight of Fancy by the Seat of Her Pants

In her dream, the bad guys ran behind Diana screaming for her to stop. They swarmed toward her, jumping from behind rocks. Their boots stomped on the hard ground, pounding a tempo to their catcalls. She stretched out her long legs and ran, leaning forward. Willing her body to outpace them. But the roar from behind told her they were gaining. They would catch her soon. She could feel the stir of air as their hands grabbed for her. Ready to clutch her clothing and pull her to a stop. She leaped then, in a last desperate bid for freedom and the air took her. Lifted her.

Beneath her the men grabbed for her feet, but she rose, flying high. Flying above their outstretched hands that tried to snag her out of the air. Flying out into the sky. Out of reach. She did a loop-de-do above their heads and flew off.

The alarm rang, plummeting her back to earth. Grounding her. Fortunately, there were no bad men in her bedroom. She slammed the silence button and hauled herself out of bed. Rubbing sleep from her eyes, she stumbled out into the living room. Opened the door to the yard to let Flannery, her Golden, out to pee.

She turned on the water kettle to heat up water for tea and then switched on the radio to catch the news. Clips from the hearing spoiled her breakfast. The Supreme Court was getting ready to take away women's autonomy. A senator had made another stupid comment about rape. Another Attorney General had been caught sexually harassing a staff member. The president was complaining that women were absurd taking issue with things that were just "boys being boys," or "locker-room talk."

Diana feed her scrambled eggs to Flannery having lost her appetite listening to a world that seemed to hate women even more than usual.

As she got dressed, she could hear sirens growing steadily closer. Had there

been an accident? Or, she almost laughed at the thought, was her dream coming true? Were they coming to take her away?

She sat on the side of the bed and pulled on her boots. They'd already started imprisoning children, after all, simply for coming into the country while having the wrong skin color. And people were dying - because of their race, or their religion. At what point, she thought, slipping on a bracelet, did watching others' lives be oppressed slide into living in a fascist state?

The sirens were closer. It sounded like they were coming down her road. She leaned down and hugged Flannery, taking her to the back door. "Go to the meeting spot," she whispered in the dog's ear as she let her out. "I'll find you."

They were already pounding on the front door, by the time she reached the hallway. She looked at her trench coat hanging on the peg by the door, as a voice hollered, "Open up, police." Through the curtains she could see the flashing lights of vehicles in her driveway and all along the road in front of her house.

She reached for the door, deciding to skip the trench coat. No point in hiding any longer. As she opened the door, she saw them. Guns pointed at her and angry men, so many angry men, but she didn't wait. She took one step. They lifted their guns, aiming.

Sometimes, you have to stop rising above it all, she thought, as she leaped into the air. She did a loop-de-do above their heads, deflecting bullets with her bracelets.

Somedays, she just had to fucking be Wonder Woman and save the world.

Priscilla Berggren-Thomas

## Call Me Baba Yaga : An Essay

By Deborah J Goemans

Shortly after our children left home, I met a psychotic chicken. Scrawny and balding, she trembled at the slightest touch. My friend Pamula tried everything she could think of to get the chicken to eat. Even Saltine crackers. Nothing worked. Instead of eating the cracker, the chicken sat on it, as if willing it to hatch into healthy little Saltine chicks.

I recognize that chicken; I am that chicken. My chicks have flown and my nest is empty, save for my rooster. I sit upon random projects—*Will this fill my nest? Will that fill my nest?*

Scott and I raised our chicks in a big old nest in a small town in upstate New York, near Song Mountain—an area as musical as its name—where spring thaws to the high-pitched whistle of peepers and phoebes; summer buzzes bumble bees, hummingbirds, and mosquitoes; fall grinds with the sounds of the harvest; and winter cracks and crunches salt upon ice. Our family had its seasonal songs too: the giggly spring dances, the splashing pool, the juicy bite of the apple festival, and the endless cabin fever squabbles, all played out against a backdrop of piano practice, Rug Rats, Harry Potter, Lion King, Shrek, Titanic, Spice Girls, Weird Al, and Mystery Science Theater.

When our girls flew away, shortly after I closed my business and just as I turned a monstrous menopausal fifty, they took that noise with them and the old house settled back into the songs of nature.

I was expecting the house to stay more or less tidy but soon realized an old house requires as much medical care as an old person. We had used our house well and heartily, spending our busy lives enjoying rather than fixing and maintaining, and so by then our pool had turned into a plastic swamp

filled with sickly, mutated frogs, a croak of frogs, as I liked to call them. That was handy, for if things weren't bad enough, our family dog Elvis upped and died. My allergist recommended frogs, lizards, spiders, or snakes as replacement pets. Now really? Those are plagues, not pets.

A dull lethargy permeated my very essence. The only time I brushed my hair and got dressed was for doctor appointments and funerals, like my granny before she died. I watched a brain numbing gaggle of *The View*. I stalked my children on Facebook. Well versed in the dangers of drinking as a full-time job, I keep it as a hobby. Unlike the chicken, I do eat. A lot.

In Wiccan and New Age circles, this, the “crone” stage of life is celebrated as a time of deep wisdom and reflection. Crone celebrations incorporate circle dances, sage smudgings, and renaming ceremonies. The renaming ceremony has particularly taken off with the “Debbie Boomers,” those of us cursed with a name as aging as wrinkles. Now that our leader, Debbie Reynolds has died no one wants to be a Debbie anymore. For years I used to help people remember my name by proudly turning to the side and saying, “Deb-bra.” And now, it’s more like [slump] never mind.

I know many women who are truly wise crones, and who continue to contribute to their communities with grace and insight. I want to do that—to own the crone, to make it a feminist statement, but I find the folklore picture more apt for me. In folktales, the old woman is symbolized as Baba Yaga, a used-up mother who lives in a house that spins on chicken feet. She captures young children and throws them into her bath, then eats them. Baba Yaga’s lips are cracked and sunken; her eyes bloodshot—veins overflowing with regret. She cackles instead of laughs; she squawks instead of speaks. When her children call, she is harsh and brisk to hide her tears and swollen throat; to push them away still further if they *must* be gone. She attempts to offer her

wisdom with amulets and old wives' tales to the indifferent and deriding and is scorned until she cries out, "It will be thus, mark my words" and when the truth is found, she is blamed as having cursed it into being.

And that broom, that is no ordinary broom—it's a symbol of some use for the poor woman. She doesn't use it to fly; her high-flying days are over, but don't dispense of her just yet, she pleads. Look, look, I can still clean the house!

A couple of months after I first met the psychotic chicken, Pamula asked me to look after her animals while she and her family went on vacation. Scott and I drove up to Pam's beautiful home overlooking the valley where the trees bleed maple syrup and the garden is voluptuous and easily plucked. While Scott made a BBQ near the house, I went to feed the animals. Some foxes had gotten into the chicken coop a few weeks earlier and there were only a few chickens remaining, but my chicken was still going strong. She was eating again and was jolly and fat. I soon realized why. She had adopted a litter of bunnies and with a cluck and a swagger, she proudly showed me her grandkids. I cackled my jealous admiration along with her until I realized the gate to the coop had closed and I could not get out of the newly secured area. I was trapped. "Scott," I shouted. "Sccoott!" No answer. "SKKOTT!" The chickens scattered in panic as my voice echoed back through the air as a loud squawk. I looked around, the shouting had made me lightheaded and it felt as if the coop was spinning around me. I knew then that my transformation was complete—there was no need for a Wiccan ceremony. That was my ceremony; I have even given myself a new name—just call me Baba Yaga.

## JOYRIDE

By Frank Kelly

The night we stole the car wasn't much different from all the other nights that summer, except maybe it was a little hotter, and we were too broke to buy one coke between us, and we were the kind of bored you get when it's almost time to go back to school. Tom Cummings wasn't one of my regular buddies. He and his shiftless family lived on Masten Ave., the next block over ... in that white house with half the shingles missing. Bruce, Tom's older brother, was the real deal. At eighteen, he'd already done time in *Juivie*. Tom aspired to be like Bruce and I aspired to be like Tom. Nobody picked on Tom Cummings. He was tough enough, himself, at fifteen. And, though he never cried for help, it was understood that, if he did, Big Brother Bruce would like nothing better than to feed you a knuckle sandwich.

I didn't have a big brother. I was the big brother in my family. But I wasn't much at fighting and neither was my brother. Our biggest muscle was our brains. And the problem with big brains back then ... back in that small town ... was they got you into trouble. Kids with smaller brains tended to have bigger biceps. Their way of letting you know they were better than you was to beat your brains out – or try to – every chance they got. There was a gang at school I was constantly running from.

But running from the bullies was embarrassing. And our Dad wasn't around enough to teach me how to stick up for myself. I wanted to do something to gain my tormentors' respect - like a young member of the mafia, who had to shoot somebody to get "made." I wasn't about to shoot someone. Stealing a car sounded impressive enough.

We talked about options on the back stoop of my house ... in hushed tones, so as not to disturb the family who lived in the flat below ours. We rejected the idea of any of the cars on the street, even if someone like old man Halloran had left their keys in the ignition, which he frequently did. That wouldn't be much of a challenge.

"How about that little used car lot down by the railroad tracks," suggested Tom? "The owner keeps all the keys in that little shack ... and the windows are plenty big enough for you to get your boney butt through. All we gotta do is break one with a rock. What da ya say?"

The truth is, I was scared. But the thought of doing something like that ... something I could brag about ... something that would establish me as more than a pimped, buck toothed sissy ... was irresistible. "O.K.," I muttered.

Tom slapped me hard as he bounced up. "Let's do it."

Ten minutes later we were crouched outside the little shack beside the railroad tracks with a faded AL's AUTOS sign over the door. Five minutes and dozens of thrown rocks later, we'd managed to knock out the nearest streetlight, plunging the line of cars into darkness. Next, we broke a side window and, with Tom's goading, I crawled through ... cutting my hand on the broken glass in the process.

Inside, keys to the dozen or so cars that comprised Al's inventory, hung on a pegboard; each one labeled with the car's make and year. I chose the '55 Chevy that I'd noticed half way down the line and, snatching the keys, crawled back out through the broken window.

The Chevy's V-8 turned over like a charm and the gas tank registered half-full. The car bumped over the curb and we headed toward Mohawk Street, where we stole a set of license plates from another Chevy, a Black '55 Impala. Damn. How lucky can you get?

We were on a country road just east of town when we saw the flashing red lights in the rear view mirror.

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An hour later, we were sitting on a hard wooden bench in the Police Station, when my father walked through the front door ... in uniform, sergeant stripes half hidden by his black M.P. arm band. Red faced, he walked by us without uttering a word and disappeared behind a door marked CAPTAIN. Twenty minutes later he emerged. Grabbing me by the arm without breaking stride, he dragged me out of the building, down the granite steps and shoved me into the army jeep parked at the curb. We rode home in silence.

My mother knocked on my bedroom door the next morning. My Dad was waiting. We had somewhere to be. That somewhere turned out to be the army base. I followed him into a large building identified as the GYM. The man who met us was all muscle. He looked like he could take on an entire gang of bullies and come out on top.

“Your father tells me you did something foolish,” he said in a deep voice. I nodded glumly. “I have an idea,” he continued. “I think you should spend some time here with me.”

“O.K.,” I muttered.

Over the months that followed, I learned that Sergeant Major Mike “Bull” O’Connor had been bullied as a boy, himself, that he’d gotten in trouble with the law, that the judge had given him a choice: jail or the army. He’d chosen the army. He and my father had served together in the War.

My father had left my Mom during that war ... for another woman. Now *we* were at war. I blamed him for being bullied ... for feeling vulnerable. He knew how I felt ... knew *he* couldn’t reach me ... teach me to choose fight over flight. He must have thought his friend Bull O’Connor could. For once, my old man turned out to be right. When O’Connor was finished with my training, I no longer fled from bullies.

## Flight to Freedom

by Helen Leet

Rami’s stomach clinched, as he listened to his mother, Malva, crying. Malva’s husband, Jamab, had made the agonizing decision to flee their home in Syria via a land route through Turkey, and then crossing the Aegean Sea to the Greek Island of Kos. They were Palestinian Syrians, and the surrounding nations of Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon did not grant visas to Palestinians.

Malva sighed heavily. Her sons, Ali, twelve, and Rami were strong, and would be able to manage the four day trek. She worried so about Saya, who was only five years old, and the two month old infant, Haya.

Jamab had been considering this move for months now, and when his brother, Mustafa, was murdered this past week, it solidified his plan to leave his beloved Syria. He sold livestock, his vehicle, and dug up the money he had buried. He was paying a smuggler \$2500 to help his family get safely through Turkey, but there are no guarantees in this business. It was a four day journey via land to the Turkish border, and they would be crossing through some active conflict sites, passing through government check points and avoiding sniper bullets.

“How do I prepare our children for this?” she anxiously asked Jamab in a hoarse whisper.

“Enough! I did not enjoy making this decision, but it is made. I hope our family makes it safely to a land where we can live more freely, but we must take this risk. We may have to sacrifice the life of a child, or even one of us, to save the rest of the family. These are dire times, Malva. There are no easy answers. Try to rest a bit, we will wake the children in the middle of the night, and leave under the safety of darkness. Did you pack as I directed?”

Malva nodded.

“No more tears. You will scare the children. We must put on brave faces, even if we do not feel it. Do you understand?” He looked directly into her eyes, as he held her shoulders and made her face him. Malva nodded solemnly.

“We can do this,” Jamab stated, but the tremble in his voice revealed his underlying anxiety and doubts.

“With Allah’s blessing to give us strength, we can do this. I have packed the necessities in small packs. The boys can easily carry backpacks. I worry about Saya and Haya.”

Jamad nodded, “I will carry both girls, if necessary. Issam and his wife, Avia, are travelling with us. They have no children, and have offered to assist with our children. The weather is warmer and calm now, and it is a good time to travel and to cross the Aegean. We cannot risk waiting for Haya to get older. I am sorry for that.”

They tried to catch some sleep before the start of the trip in a few hours. Malva lovingly nursed Haya before drifting into a restless sleep.

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“Rami, wake up. We have to get ready for our trip.” Malva gently shook her young son awake. Ali was already awake, eating a slice of toast. As Rami sat up, Ali handed him a slice of toast. “Father says to eat fast. He wants to be on the trail within a half hour. Hurry!” Rami grabbed his favorite Teddy bear, Hammi, and tried to jam it into his back pack, but it would not fit. Rami began to sulk, “I want to take Hammi! He does not fit into my backpack!”

As Malva was trying to comfort him, Jamab grabbed the small bear, quickly tore the arms and legs off the stuffed animal, and stuffed the remains into the back pack. “There! That is all we can take of Hammi. Get dressed. No tears, we have to leave very soon.”

Their journey began in darkness. Jamab carried Saya, and Malva had Haya strapped to her chest. About a mile down the trail, they met up with Issam and Avia. They took back trails whenever possible. Jamab and Issam each had a copy of a mapped trail. They showed their wives and the boys the location they hoped to reach by the end of the day. The stopping area for the night would be in a mountainous area, and just past a town where active battles were going on. They would spend the night in an abandoned phosphate fertilizer plant.

They walked, and walked, and walked. They climbed, and climbed and climbed. Rami thought his legs were going to fall off, but he kept going. If he slowed down, either Ali or his father would nudge him forward. Fortunately, that first day, Haya slept through much of the journey.

They slept fitfully that night in the phosphate plant and were covered with white dust when they left in the early morning hours. They made it through 3 government check points over the next three days. Bullets had whizzed by their heads when they crossed the lowlands, but thankfully, no one was injured. Their water supply ran low, but they pushed onward.

Finally, they reached the shores of the Aegean Sea. The first main section of their journey was completed! As they headed down to the shore, men yelled at them gruffly to hurry, get on the boat. It is ready to leave!

Malva was suddenly terrified. The boat was seriously overloaded, how could they possibly get on the boat? Jamab grabbed her arm and half dragged her to the boat. “Get in, Malva! Hang on tight to the boat and the children!” Malva did not realize that Jamab had not gotten in the boat until she saw him waving from the shore. He was yelling something, but she could not hear him. Rami, Ali, and Saya were clinging to her tightly. Little Haya snuggled against her chest. “The crossing is only two and a half miles at this location. We will make it.” She prayed to Allah that she was right.

# The ABC's of Flight by Cecile Swift Lippitt

## A

### Armen Firman

In 810 A.D., Armen Firman attempted to fly by jumping from a tower in a large cloak with wooden struts designed to catch the wind. He escaped with minor injuries.

## B

### Bumblebee

A bumblebee's wing span and body mass should make it impossible to fly. Scientific experiments, one involving lasers and tiny mirrors glued to the bees, determined that bees use "mini hurricanes" to achieve lift.

## C

### Chanute

The aviation pioneer and author, Octave Chanute, assisted Wilbur Wright and others in the field by sharing results of aeronautical experiments.

## D

### Dayton

Dayton, Ohio is the home of Wilbur and Orville Wright. When asked what advice he would give to someone starting out in life, Wilbur replied, "Pick out a good father and mother and begin life in Ohio."

## E

### Earhart

At a flying exhibition, a flyer spotted young Amelia and friends, and dove at them. Earhart stood her ground. "I did not understand it at the time," she said, "but I believe that little red airplane said something to me as it swished by."

## F

### Francis Swift

In the early 1900's, my great grandfather moved his young family from Iowa to Dayton, Ohio. Why? Because it was a hotbed for inventors and flight enthusiasts like himself.

## G

### George Cayley

Many consider Cayley, a British inventor, the Father of Aviation. The Wright brothers credited his inventions, including the multi-wing design, with helping them build their plane, "Flyer."

## H

### Hot Air Balloon:

Early attempts at manned flight included flying "machines" powered by hot air. Balloonists were able to solve one aviation problem, getting off the ground.

## I

### Icarus

In Greek Mythology, Icarus, overcome with the joy of flight, flew too close to the sun, melting his wings made of wax and feathers. He plunged into the sea and drowned.

## J

Mathematician Katherine Johnson was instrumental in the success of early NASA missions, accurately calculating the trajectory of space capsules. The astronauts trusted her work more than IBM computers.

## K

Kitty Hawk had everything the Wright brothers were looking for: isolation, sustained strong winds, and lots of sand. Although Dayton remained home base, the brothers lived and worked in Kitty Hawk for three years.

## L

Three hundred years after his death in 1519, Da Vinci's scientific works surfaced. His exhaustive study of the mechanics of flight concluded, "There is in man [the ability] to sustain himself in the air by the flapping of wings."

## M

In 1979, Paul MacCready and a team of engineers built a human-powered aircraft. In it, a single pilot crossed the English Channel using just pedal power.

## N

Leaving the nest is a big step for fledgling birds. Some, like swallows and woodpeckers, do not leave the nest until they are strong flyers. Some, like red-winged blackbirds, will make forays out of the nest before they can fly.

## O

"O that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest," Psalm 55:6. This psalm beautifully captures our longing for flight.

## P

Florence Lowe "Pancho" Barnes was the granddaughter of Thaddeus S. C. Lowe who was in charge of the Union Army Balloon Corps. In 1928, she took her first flying lesson and soloed after only six hours of flight instruction. She owned Pancho's Happy Bottom Riding Club catering to flyers from adjacent Edwards Air Force Base.

## Q

In 2018, NASA's Lunar Quest Program turned attention to the moon, with the possibility of creating an outpost, thus extending human presence into deep space.

## R

The three aspects of a plane's movement are roll, pitch, and yaw. Roll uses the longitudinal axis allowing the wings to dip from one side to the other.

## Snoopy

In 1965, Snoopy makes his debut as a World War One flying ace, at the controls of his trusty Sopwith Camel biplane (read doghouse). Snoopy is ready to fight the Red Baron, based on real-life flying ace Manfred von Richthofen.

## TransAtlantic

This novel by Colum McCann sets a fact straight: The first nonstop transatlantic flight in a fixed wing aircraft took place in 1919, a full eight years before Charles Lindbergh's famed flight. The credit goes to British aviators Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Brown.

## U.S. Air Services

A popular American aeronautics magazine, U.S. Air Services, published articles of interest to aviator buffs. In 1945, Orville Wright authored an article for the magazine titled "The Mythical Whitehead Flight" to squash the rumor aeronautical engineer, Gustave Whitehead preceded the Wright brothers in a plane of his own.

## V-2 Rocket

The V2 Rocket, the world's first long range missile, was developed by Germany toward the end of World War II. It was the first object to leave the earth's atmosphere and travel into space.

## Wright

Without any formal education, Wilbur and Orville Wright became the first to unlock the mysteries of controlled flight. Much has been written about the many influences that led the brothers down this unlikely path. Their mother, Susan Koerner Wright, played a key role with her natural mechanical abilities. A wooden helicopter, brought home by their father, seems to have led to an early fascination with flight. Wilbur's passion was reignited in 1896 with accounts of the death of Otto Lilienthal known as "The Flying Man" in a glider crash. Wilbur felt obligated to continue the research and experimentation in the field. On December 17, 1903, at 10:35 am, Wilbur cheered on Orville who guided "Flyer" into the air for the first time.

## X-Wing

The X-wing starfighter is a fictional spacecraft, a superior dogfighter flown by the Rebel Alliance. A shot from an X-wing destroyed the Death Star and saved the galaxy.

## Yeager

On October 14, 1947, in an experimental rocket-powered aircraft, Chuck Yeager became the first pilot to break the sound barrier.

## Zeppelin

This rigid airship was named for its inventor, Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin. His first successful flight was made in 1900. During World War I, dirigibles were utilized as bombers and scouts. After the Hindenburg disaster in 1937, the public no longer trusted the big airships. By 1938, Germany had grounded the last of the fleet. Interestingly, the mast that sits atop the Empire State Building was designed to be a hub for zeppelins.

# FLIGHT

By Lynn Olcott

Far away an ambulance can be heard. The white dog lifts its muzzle and sends mournful notes into the afternoon sky. It's a song, not a howl. Definitely a song, Suzanne thinks.

"Does he always do that?" Suzanne asks, turning to the man sitting near her on the same broad bench.

"Do what?"

"Sing. Sing along with the sirens like that."

"Oh, sometimes." The man turns back to his newspaper.

"How long have you had him?" She is just making conversation.

"Oh, I don't know."

Not much of a talker, Suzanne thinks. Just her luck. What she needs is talk, conversation, anecdotes, opinions, sound.

"Well nice talking to you," Suzanne says, rising to go.

"You want him?" asks the man, gesturing the leash toward her.

"You don't want him?" Suzanne asks, stroking the dog's soft muzzle and muscular neck. "What's his name?" But when she turns back, the man and his newspaper are gone.

For the next few years Suzanne and the dog live happily in her apartment. She eventually names the dog Bill after a long-ago boyfriend who had a lovely voice. This was following an appointment with a veterinarian for a check-up to see if there was any identifying information to be had, a chip, a tattoo, anything.

"Nothing," the vet says, "but of course he is an older dog."

As if that explains anything, thinks Suzanne.

Bill continued to sing along with emergency vehicles, lifting his throat to join them in song. When the newborn in the next apartment wailed in the night, Bill crooned along softly. When a radio blared hip hop, Bill provided a sequence of throaty base beats. But it was the tuneful ballad of longing that Bill sang to the moon that was Suzanne's favorite of Bill repertoire.

Unbeknownst to Suzanne, Bill contacts an agent and makes a demo recording. It isn't that he's unhappy with Suzanne. It's just that he longs for his life to mean more than long walks and peaceful evenings. Sometimes he feels that his music is going to just burst right out of him.

Suzanne understands, of course. She's known all along that anyone with Bill's talent would just have to be given a chance. Sure enough, when his big break comes, Suzanne drives him to the airport.

"Goodbye, Suzanne," Bill says to her as they separate at security.

"You're doing the right thing," Suzanne tells him, feeling both happy and sad.

Suzanne watches the plane rise in the sky as Bill enters his new career, soaring into the distance on his first class, non-stop, transatlantic flight.

### **Why I am an Infrequent Flyer!**

By Gerald E. Rehkugler

It's the fall of 1957. I have just completed my research study of screw conveyors for my Master's degree. It is time to report my results to my sponsor, a Cooperative based in Ohio. For the first time in my life I am expected to fly on a commercial airline. Think of that. A 22-year-old former farm boy who has never flown is having his professional debut. Fear and trepidation were rampant.

The flight is booked and on a blustery autumn afternoon I arrive at the Tompkins County Airport, more or less prepared for my adventure. There were no lines for boarding in that era. Security? What security? Upon boarding the World War II era DC-3 I wend my way back to a seat near the tail of the aircraft. I observe that many are smoking so there is a blue haze in the cabin. Frequent flyer businessmen sit absorbed in their newspapers. There are no smart phones or laptops in that era.

The cabin door is closed and sealed and while taxiing the stewardess makes the safety announcements. For the first time I am cinching down my seatbelt and being informed that my seat cushion can be a flotation device in event of a water landing! I think there was only one exit and I was likely the farthest from it.

There is not that much traffic at the airport so soon we are on the end of the runway ready for take off. Along with the noise of the engines I could hear all kinds of clunks and bangs that were unfamiliar to me. It must have been the retraction of the wheels. I don't know if they had flaps on that type of aircraft.

Soon we were in the air moving west into the sun and a chaotic west wind. Since I was sitting in the tail of the plane, I got the roughest ride. The tail section seemed to be doing figure eights! Up, down, left and right jostling my physical space and causing psychological trauma. Now I am looking for the barf bag, anticipating that this not going to stop. Meanwhile my obviously frequent flyer companions are continuing to read their papers and smoke. In retrospect, I now understand why my early flying days were so nauseating. After the elimination of smoking on airplanes life has become so much better

Upon arrival in Ohio I deplaned and met my faulty thesis advisor Dr. William Millier along with the corporate sponsors. Their immediate greeting was, "You don't look very well". They were accurate in their assessment. However, with good fresh air and a steady surface to walk on, I soon recovered.

Fortunately my presentation went well and within a day or so I was ready for my return flight. Once again I boarded the ancient DC-3. This time I was seated near the cabin door near the wings. Certainly that was a more stable area of the aircraft. I was looking forward to a more comfortable return to Ithaca. However, my calm was interrupted when the pilot came on with a message that there was a mechanical problem that had to be fixed before departure. Within a few minutes a mechanic entered through the cabin door and proceeded to the cockpit. Next there were a few clunks and perhaps some choice words as if things were not going well. Not long after there are several loud bangs as if someone had taken a sledgehammer to the plane. Not a very reassuring sound. Moments later the mechanic left the aircraft carrying his metal toolbox. We then buttoned up and took off. From there it was an uneventful return to terra firma Ithaca, New York Tompkins County Airport.

It is now 61 years later and my inaugural flight is still a vivid memory. Over those years, I truly have been an infrequent flyer. I have never really enjoyed flying. My fear has gone but fortunately I have never had to make frequent airline trips. When I have made trips, I seem to almost always encounter some unusual situation. September 17, 1974 I was scheduled to fly from Heathrow to The Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands. When I arrived at Heathrow, I was delayed for several hours because terrorists who had stormed The Hague were scheduled to fly out of Schiphol. Eventually the terrorist flight was accomplished, we were subjected to a body search and then my flight departed Heathrow. My plane was the first plane into the re-opened airport. The place was like a ghost town. That was another memorable event for an infrequent flyer. On that same journey while returning from Spain, my flight stopped at the Lisbon, Portugal airport to refuel. We never reached the terminal because of terrorist activity there as well.

Perhaps if I had ever become a frequent flyer, I would have a series of wonderful flights. However, don't travel with me! You may well encounter impediments that you didn't expect.

Take Flight

By Laurie T. Seamans

Sitting by the bed, Dora watched the rise and fall of her mother's breathing, not daring to move. She seemed peaceful, a change from earlier when her mother pulled at her gown in disjointed, maniacal motions. It was terrifying to watch. Stay calm, she thought, wanting to run screaming from the room. I have to be here, I have to stay.

Dora stayed. Her mother settled down.

Voices down the hall, scratches of conversations. She wanted to listen but couldn't stomach the endless gossip and complaints. Dora focused on the photograph above her mother's bed, her mother's softball team from the Forties. So young, thought Dora, they were all so young and beautiful. Almost glamorous. Dora remembered another photo - her mother and some friends on a trip to New York City, all huddled in a fake car with a sign behind them, "New York City or Bust!" Their faces filled with big smiles, raring to go. When Dora saw it, she considered asking who they were but doubted her mother would remember. She'd make a circular motion trailing away from her head saying, "My brain flew right out the window!"

Dora's mother couldn't remember friends or enemies, triumphs or heartaches. She couldn't remember the warm, red plaid pajamas she wore the day before or how much she loved coffee. We forget more or less everything in the end.

A nurse appeared and asked how she was doing. Dora wasn't sure if the nurse meant her or her mother.

"Fine, I guess. As well as can be expected."

"I'll be back to give her another dose," the nurse said, smiling thinly.

Another dose. Dora initially thought the morphine would be on a schedule, but an aide explained it was better if she didn't get it too often. It made patients too comfortable and unwilling to let go. Some discomfort is a good thing in the end.

Dora was jarred from her thoughts when her mother grabbed at her, trying hard to speak.

"Big... red... bugs," her mother said, "Big... red... bugs... at... the... house," her arm dropping to the bed.

Was she hearing her right?

"Big red bugs," her mother exclaimed as she pulled on Dora's arm, then going limp as though exhausted.

Dora had no idea what this meant. Hallucinations? Memories? Memories of what and when? Was she talking about after Dora's sister passed away? An infestation of ladybugs appeared in her sister's kitchen and everyone said it was Sarah. Dora's sister loved winged creatures – ladybugs, butterflies, dragonflies and dragons. It felt like a sign.

Dora's mother loved birds. She had parakeets when Dora was a kid and always a bird feeder under the kitchen window. She kept a small guidebook on hand and knew the difference between a grackle and a cowbird, a cedar waxwing and a cardinal, and more.

What was it about birds that was so captivating? Was it an allegory for freedom? That somehow we can escape the trappings of this earth and fly off to a better place?

A half hour passed. Her mother began to move. Not spastically like earlier, just a subtle shifting and rustling of the sheets. Should she tell the nurse?

Dora heard a nurse's cart in the hall. It was time for afternoon medications. Perhaps her mother's internal clock knew it as well. The nurse entered, administered the dose and left.

Afternoon faded into evening and the call to dinner brought quiet to the halls for a while. Dora's mother would have no dinner. She stopped eating almost two weeks before. Her features were changing, she was fading away. A week ago, her mother recognized Dora when she arrived, "Thank god you're here!" Today, Dora barely recognized her mother.

Standing to stretch, Dora wiped her eyes. It was 6:30 pm. Residents would be back in their rooms soon. She wanted to go home for a while, but dreaded clearing the snow off her car so she sat back down.

The night sounds cycled through – residents back to their rooms, visitors talking loudly over blaring televisions, and staff changing shifts. Shift changes were the hardest. Information never seemed to get from one group to the next. One hand didn't know what the other was doing.

"Time flies when you're having fun," Dora used to say to her mother, whose response was a sarcastic, "Yeah, right!" Most days her mother was okay. Some days she talked about leaving. She told Dora that when she got out, she was going to get a car. Maybe a Buick. Something big. She wanted a car that all her friends could ride in and take off for parts unknown. Dora pictured the photo of her mother and her friends and smiled.

Early morning now and pitch dark outside. The snow stopped during the night. Dora felt numb and exhausted. She went in search of coffee in the little kitchen up the hall. Sipping from the cup, the bitter taste helped wake her as she walked back toward the room.

An aide trotted down the hall toward her.

“You have to come now, it’s time,” she said, turning around and heading back.

Entering the room, another aide was at the end of the bed. Dora’s mother was panting now, rushed and urgent breaths.

What should she do? She’d never done this before. Did she hold her? Stand here wringing her hands? She waited, watching, breathing. Dora looked at the clock. It was 4:59 a.m. Her mother drew a deep breath and exhaled, her hand falling from her thigh to the bed. 5:00 a.m. on the dot. She was gone. The room was still.

Dora notice a breeze push at the curtain. The window was open. One of the aides explained, “We open the window to let the spirit fly out into the world.”

Dora smiled. “Take flight, mom. Get in your car and go. They’re waiting. I’ll be okay.”

## The Flight of a Monarch Butterfly

By Marian Strang

You saw me fluttering about your garden or along the road; let me land on your shoulder and tell you my story...

I never knew my mother, but I know that this summer she had laid many tiny eggs on a milkweed leaf, one of which became me! After my hatching, wearing a crazy suit of green, yellow and white stripes and using my eight stumpy legs, I was able to munch my way through leaf after leaf of a milkweed plant at breakneck speed! I grew so much and so fast that I had to climb out of my gorgeous skin four times because it couldn’t keep up with my expanding waistline!

Enough food already! I just had to take a rest and hang out for awhile! So I hooked myself to a twig and soon my beautiful striped coat had become a bright green case! So comfy to just dangle about, yet I felt that something strange was going on in my body. My green pod was

turning into a brown shell! A couple of weeks of quiet suspension and my shell slowly became transparent, showing a tangle of folded things inside!

Soon I felt a strong urge to escape from that little prison and stretch out! Suddenly, it cracked open. I emerged slowly, by means of...what's this? Six legs? And...what are those wide things on my back? What has happened to me while I was swinging in that chrysalis?

I flap those colorful wide things on my back: I can fly! But I feel so weak and hungry! Bright flowers all around; they must have sweet nectar - just what I crave. Wow! I can suck it up with this funny long tube on my head...yummy! Now let's go...

Other creatures just like me are also flying around... I hear whisperings among them about a long trip soon, a flight to a far-off country. This sounds like a good idea to me, but how am I going to fly the thousands of miles they're talking about?

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The best I can do is maybe a hundred miles a day, following unknown signals from the space above and the land below. Sometimes I can catch a ride on a breeze, but it's really hard work and I need rest and nectar from the flowers below. Sometimes I can fly almost twenty-five miles an hour! Will I make it to that warm land? Now they say that's Texas down below, or maybe Florida. And beyond there's water as far as I can see; no nectar or rest anywhere as I fly over that! I have been traveling for over two months; my beautiful wings are getting tattered and I am so tired...

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They call this Mexico, this mountainous place where my fellow travelers are landing in tall evergreens. Millions of butterflies coating the trees! Wow! I squeeze in among them. Sounds of happy music rise up from the valley; it's whispered that there are people down there celebrating our arrival! Relief spreads among us. Each one of us has flown almost three thousand miles and this rest is as sweet as the nectar which sustained us.

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Now spring breezes are nudging me from my long stupor; rustling of wings all around! Whisperings about another trip! Another long flight? No, no! Not until I can spend a little more time with that handsome butterfly I have been snuggling with lately! All of the other lady butterflies have been romancing too, but somehow we know that we have to leave most of our mates. They're so weak; surely many will die soon. A shame, but for some reason we are restless to fly north...

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Lots of spring wildflowers down there! After our first long flight north, all that nectar would be wonderful. Here's milkweed! Sucking its nectar, we then lay eggs on its leaves. How satisfying and somewhat sad...we realize that we have completed our life's journey; a new generation of Monarchs must be born soon and our children will hatch to become hungry caterpillars, morphing pupae and stunning adults, just as we were...

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My mother passed away after laying eggs on the Texan milkweed. Hatching out several weeks later, I grew fast as a hungry larva and a hanging chrysalis. The urge to fly northward

led me again to more milkweed where I mated and laid eggs on its leaves. My children, when hatched, will carry on the cycle of life that my mother and I both lived. Oh dear, I am already feeling so weak; luckily, I don't have to make the long, long flight to Mexico that my mother had to make! Sadly, I know that I must be about to die; it comforts me to know that my children will carry on our legacy...

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The grandchild of a strong and well-traveled monarch, I was an early summer hatchling. Repeating the bizarre stages of caterpillar and chrysalis before becoming an adult butterfly, my life is very much like my mother's and my grandmother's before me, except that I don't get to travel as far as my grandmother did! I wanted to see Mexico! But my instincts direct me to fly farther north, to the fields of summer wildflowers and milkweed where I will find a place to lay eggs and start another generation of our kind after my short life is over...

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In mid-summer, my mother laid my egg among many others near where my great-grandmother began her long, long flight south almost a year ago. Now I know that it is my destiny to make the same long flight to Mexico, but I won't get to lay my eggs until after the Mexican winter, when I return to the southern United States! It's my small part in a cycle which has gone on and on for thousands of years...and hopefully will continue forever, adding beauty and wonder to the earth.

### **The Flight**

By Jim Weiss

(1)

was in full force. Jewish businesses in Vienna had been ransacked or appropriated by the puppet government. Jewish intellectuals - doctors, lawyers, artists, writers, professors - were already being detained and questioned. Many were imprisoned.

(2)

Dr. Schwartz, who had graduated from medical school a few years earlier, had a successful practice in a fashionable neighborhood in Vienna. He specialized in diseases of the heart, lungs, and other chest ailments. One May morning there was a knock on the door. A man came in complaining of chest pain. Dr. Schwartz performed a physical exam and took an x-ray. He then informed his new patient that he could find nothing wrong. "You are under arrest," the man replied. Two policemen entered the office and escorted Dr. Schwartz off to prison.

(3)

Marianne Schwartz was frantic. For weeks, she could not locate her husband, even after inquiring at all the prisons in Vienna. Finally, with the help of a non-Jewish attorney, George Becker, she learned that the Nazi authorities were moving Karl from one prison to another to thwart efforts to provide him with legal support. (Later on, Dr. Schwartz would recount how in prison he heard the June 22 radio broadcast of the famous match between African American boxer Joe Lewis and his German opponent, Max Schmeling. To the great embarrassment of the Nazis, Schmeling was knocked out in the first round.)

George Becker was eventually able to negotiate the release of Schwartz under the condition that he sign a false confession stating he had performed abortions. Now out of prison, Karl and Marianne urgently pressed forward their effort to secure temporary visas to France, for which they had applied after returning to Vienna from the Alps.

Two days later, a Friday, they received an anonymous phone call. "You have to leave the country tonight or tomorrow you will be arrested," said the voice. With his false confession in the hands of the Nazis, they knew the fate of Dr. Schwartz would be sealed.

Karl and Marianne went to the French consulate to retrieve their passports, which had been submitted with their visa applications, still awaiting action. Word had gotten around that the Dutch were issuing emergency temporary visas upon arrival at the Amsterdam border, but without their passports the Schwartzes would be denied entry. The staff person at the French consulate informed Schwartz that the office was closing and he would have to return on Monday.

Karl Schwartz was not a physical man. Short of stature and somewhat rotund, he was not given to acts of bravery. But seizing that instant of absolute necessity, he pushed the consulate official aside and rushed into the office. There on the desk was a stack of passports. What happened next was a moment that determined the difference between life and death. Eyeing the stack, Schwartz could see his and his wife's passports were on the top. He grabbed them and, as he did, the official attempted to restrain him. Karl pushed by the man once again, and fled into the street.

That night, with only one small valise, Karl and Marianne boarded the train to Amsterdam, from where they eventually secured visas and passage to America. Their flight from Vienna brought them a new life, a new freedom, and a new generation - two sons, one of whom sits today and writes this true story of what happened 80 years ago.