

KILL DEVIL HILL[®]

By Marion Brimm Rewey

I wish I had seen them,
the quiet men who built bicycles and odd machines,
pushing and dragging their da Vinci dream
over the grass and sand.

It might have been a good day to change the world,
full of cumulus clouds,
strings of pelicans flying ragged formations,
a sandpiper or two and curlew calls . . .

and the wind of December
purling off the Atlantic,
plucked wires and struts,
hummed such music
as had not been heard
since sirens lured Ulysses to forbidden shores.

So,
while running seas rearranged the sand
and every man stood with feet planted firmly
on solid ground,

here, under untried skies,
on Kill Devil Hill,
a hand-made skeleton, like a prehistoric bird,
teetered on the ledge of the last frontier.

In the broken silence
of birds, wind, tide,
Orville belly-flopped on the waiting wing.

Then came the universe splitting roar –
propellers spun, sand exploded and ballooned,
chains rattled and slapped through metal guides,
the engine's pitch climbed to a scream.

The plane shuddered, rocked like a cradle,
lumbered over the dune,
rose,
hung between ocean and space,
floundered,
twisted sideways,
steadied, caught the wind
and flew!

to touch
the moon.