

“POME”
or
Ode to a Cat¹

A cute devise to pulverize
The normal male adult,
Is known to pilots far and wide
As the “Frigging Catapult.”

Now this machine is really keen
On carriers of this class,
For getting a plane from the deck to the air
There’s really no surpass.

They connect your plane and take up the strain
And point you down the deck.
Then ready or not, your chariot’s shot
And it damn near breaks your neck!

“The shot I’ve had was not so bad,”
You think, as you come to,
But glancing at the mirror reflects
A face that has turned blue.

Your mouth wide spread, you look ahead,
Your vision slowly brightening
And through the daze and blood-shot haze
The onrushing sea is frightening.

You pull on the stick, it does the trick,
Your plane begins to climb.
Your vision’s clear, and you can hear,
And now you’re feelin’ fine.

You’re feelin’ fine, that is, until
You try to bend your neck
Then wonder if you’ve had
A take-off . . . or a wreck!

You turn your neck in retrospect
For fear it’s dislocated.
While down below you seem to know,
You’re slightly casturated . . .

¹ LT Bob Hughes, VF-781 Pacemakers, on USS Bon Homme Richard (CV-31), Korea, 1951.

You try so hard to disregard
The pain that racks your back,
And the knee-pad lodged between your legs
Is but a slight drawback . . .

So now it starts, the search for charts,
To round them up’s a task.
You feel behind the seat and find . . .
Your oily pressure mask . . . !

Your hop complete, you join the fleet
And land aboard once more.
And as you taxi up the deck
You recall that you are sore.

You climb from the plane, all stiff with pain
To walk is difficult . . .
You stand and stare, to yourself and stare
At that “frigging catapult.”

To the ready-room you make your way
To learn of your next hops.
But halfway there, upon the stair
You’re stopped by our “Air Ops.”

He asks you how you liked the hop.
You answer . . . you felt “hot!”
He says, “That’s fine my boy, because,
Your next cat’s a full shot . . . !