

Bicycle by Anthony Fife

For what it's worth, folks around here
still marvel at you two, no more than ordinary guys,
who spit in Mother Nature's eye.

If you were here we'd drink a round—
down one to your name. Kettering
has some gadgets under his belt, true,
but he never left the ground.

Armstrong, Glenn—they owe their fame to you.

She was a clunky old bird, and ugly to boot,
but she went, which is something
no one ever thought she'd do.

My word, I bet it was a sight.
I bet they pissed their knickers
when she came grinding by.

But now that you mention it, we have
a grievance or two. Couldn't you
have done it around here? North Caroline thinks
she's such hot stuff: *Birthplace of Aviation* they say.

Give me a break. You know and I know
that you are Ohio boys, down to your clod-hoppers,
and anyone who says different can Google that shit.

And what about a racing stripe or two? Don't mean
to nit-pick, but form can be a function, too.
Besides, if you want to emulate the birds,
you got to note the strut, son.
Have some class; Eighty-six
the ratty canvas & bamboo.

And, Orville, brighten up your pan. The people
love you.

But who am I. There are no statues
of me down along the Edwin Moses; they are
not called the University
of Dayton Writers.

So take my criticism with a grain of salt.
Don't lose any sleep over it.

After all—you boys—you're the McCoy.
The rest of us just stand slack-jawed, daydreaming
shapes into the clouds.

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