

Millennial Icarus, July 1999

They fell from the sky
on a murky night near Martha's Vineyard
John John
unwilling heir of American royalty
we wanted to be mythic
like your father and uncles
whose clay feet
we gild over with Camelot's glamour.

Why did you fly that night?
novice pilot with a broken foot
dubious Oedipus
who limped to the cockpit on crutches
inexperienced at finding his way in the dark.
He had qualms,
but he wasn't alone
or in control.
She overcame him,
that regal golden girl
who disliked flying with her handsome husband
but must have liked having her way.

She insisted—
purring perhaps—
they ferry her sister.
Unable to resist
in the full dark
he plunged them all

down.

For days, we watched unbelieving
as crews combed the gray waters.
Finally, the family removed the white wedding tent
from the lawn at Hyannis where they were bound.

I try to imagine the cusp of the dive
accelerating spiral
up and down indistinguishable
the moment of impact
strapped and sinking—
but all I can see
is a beautiful wingéd youth
bent on desire.

