

AMELIA, OPEN UP THAT THROTTLE

Amelia Earhart was the first female aviator to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean in 1928, for which she received the Distinguished Flying Cross medal. In July, 1937 – three weeks prior to her fortieth birthday, she and her navigator Fred Noonan disappeared over the central Pacific Ocean in an attempt to circumnavigate the globe. Second Saturday artist Ben Bedford has generously granted us permission to publish his inspiring (and unabashedly feminist) ballad about her. You can hear Ben perform this song at http://www.houstonfolkmusic.org/HFS_Audio_Archive.html.

AMELIA

By Ben Bedford

D Harbor Grace Newfoundland, the ground was wet and soft.
A D G A
Were you a tad bit nervous – did you have your fingers crossed?
D G D
Hoping for a miracle of science or of God.
Em G D
Put your little airplane in the sky.
D G D
The air's a place for men, they said – those acrobats of war,
A D G A
And after all, Lucky Lindy did it all before.
D G D
Go back to your mama, go home and be a wife.
Em G D
'Cause we all know that girls ain't meant to fly.

Chorus:

Bm A G D
Amelia, open up that throttle, get above those trees.
G A G
The iceberg's loomin' sharp and white.
Bm A G D
With a big combustion engine and a fool's head full of dreams,
Em G D
You'll cut across the blue Atlantic skies.

What's it like to sit alone in the solitary dark?
Your friend the rumblin' engine, and a dome of northern stars.
Did you laugh a little as you did what they said that you could not?
While watched by a hundred million eyes.

At 9 AM on New York time, was Luck the one you thanked?
Was it trust in progress, as night behind you sank.
Hours up on Lindy's time you caught the eastern glow.
As the coast of Ireland came into sight. Chorus

Fourteen hours and fifty-six minutes in the clouds –
From the time that you pushed off to the second you touched down.
A thermos of tomato soup to warm against the chills –
A little faith can go a long, long way. Chorus

A big combustion engine, and a fool's head full of dreams.
You'll cut across the blue Atlantic skies.