High Flight

Flying Officer John Gillespie Magee

He was killed in the war

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the sky on laughter-silvered wings.
Sun-wards I’ve climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds - and done a thousand things
You have not dreamed of. Wheeled and soared;
And swung high in sunlit silence; hovering there.

I’ve chased the shouting winds along, and
Flung my eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue air.

I’ve topped the windswept heights with easy grace
Where lark, or even eagle flew.
And while with silent, lifting mind I trod
The high un-trespassed sanctity of space;
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.