

# English II Pieces

## 2000-2001

### Airline safety

by Scott Fereday

Ever since I was a young child, I have felt more safe when flying in an airplane than when traveling in a car or on another mode of transportation. Flying made me feel like a bird: going safely and quickly to our destination. The first time I flew on an airliner was one of the greatest experiences of my life. I was ten years old. I will never forget walking onto the airplane and having my own reclining seat with personal music at the touch of a dial.

My many positive experiences with flying made it hard for me to understand why some people are so scared to fly. Many articles on the safety of transportation methods rank airlines first, with the fewest fatal accidents annually. The ratio of airliner to car crashes is about 1:100. Coming in second for safety is traveling by boat. Even with all this statistical data, many people believe, when one airliner crashes, that all airplanes potentially possess the same flaw. Therefore, passengers are terrified that all airplanes are doomed to go down. This is NOT true. Flying on a commercial airline is by far the safest and most efficient way to travel.

One reason why cars, motorcycles, trains, and boats are not as safe as flying is because most of these vehicles don't require the use of seat belts. This lack of safety equipment escalates the risk for a fatal accident to occur. When a person hops into his car, he usually does not even think about putting on his seat belt.

On the other hand, when one travels on a specific airline, the odds of a serious accident happening are only about one in 1,000,000. The odds of crashing on any airline at all are about five out of 1,000,000. Basically, your odds of being injured on an airliner are as high as your chances of winning the lottery.

An airplane is much more comfortable than a car or a train, and is only half as loud. On long flights, the crew serves meals and shows movies. Passengers are free to doze off whenever they feel like it because they control nothing (except their kids). In a car, none of this is possible, especially if you are driving.

In an airplane, the pilot is always ahead of the game. Pilots go to school for many extra years to learn how to be safe,

### Creation

by Tristan McClaran

I am built from great Lego cities  
and Lincoln Log towns.

Fiery red rock of Canyonlands burns into my soul, as  
deep gorges of the Salmon River, like a hypnotic snake,  
conform my mind.

I come from underground snow caves  
where my friends and I once slept, babies in a womb.  
Long skiing days at the Little Hill molded my legs into  
string cheese.

Cozy nights by the fire,  
we listened to stories, breathing pine-smelling air  
creating sleep-inducing fantasies.

Earth, Air, Fire, and water surround me,  
but,  
my greater element is  
Trouble.

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### The Ticket

by Chase Johnson

My mom and I were traveling to a soccer game in Weiser. On the way down, my mom was telling me all the good parts of her driving record. I asked her about my driving privileges. She said, "You will have to pay attention at all... Oh my gosh, there is a policeman." She gasped and put on the brakes.

I wondered why my mom was so worried about policemen if she paid attention at all times. It turned out that he was just passing by. Suddenly, it seemed like my mom was paying attention even more than usual. Her attention didn't last long. She seemed to forget what had just happened, because five minutes later, she began telling me about being attentive again. It occurred to me that people would much rather talk about their perfect driving records than remember even one moment when they were behaving less-than-perfectly.

People can easily forget things that they don't want to remember. I had a baseball game a few days ago. The next day, I went to baseball practice and checked the scorebook to see how many hits I had made. I was shocked. As I remembered the game, I recalled my two hits, but the

good pilots. Pilots use radar so they always know where other planes are. While radar does not prevent accidents, preventive measures can be taken to stop an incident if the pilot has enough warning.

In a car, drivers feel as if they control their own fate most of the time. However, car accidents are not always the driver's fault. Sometimes, another driver, who is coming head-on, is drunk, or is driving irresponsibly. You cannot always control your fate when you are in a car, but when you fly on an airplane, you don't have to worry nearly as much. If there is a choice between flying and driving, flying is the safest way to go.

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### Fenway Park

by Chase Johnson

Walking through the busy street in downtown Boston, I can't help but notice how everything is so compacted: four buildings here take up the same amount of space as one does in Idaho. There is a seven-story High School in front of me. The two hundred students at my high school would be lost in such a building. The street is filled with lively chatter. As I catch a faint whiff of hot dogs, I wonder where the field is.

I search for some big focal-point entrance with a huge cement arch or something. While I gaze off into the distance, I almost miss noticing my uncle slide through a regular, house-sized door. Even though I am not expecting to enter the ballpark like that, it is nice. The whole place seems to take on a friendlier atmosphere.

Inside the eight-foot doorway, I see a huge cement area filled with people bustling this way and that. The vast space and thousands of people remind me how insignificant I am compared to the ballpark. As I walk through the cement area, I catch another whiff of hot dogs. I find the nearest food stand and ask for a hotdog. What! They are not serving hotdogs yet! I am disappointed, so I head up to watch batting practice.

I arrive at my old wooden seat. Its peeling paint reminds me of the neglected benches on our lawn. Seeing that many of the fans are not at the game yet, I decide to go closer. I look out at the team taking batting practice from the rail that separates the stands from the field. I see the orange and black uniforms of the Tigers. The Red Sox are finished with their batting practice. I lean on the railing and watch the guy in front of me. He is hitting off a tee. As he looks up to talk to his coach, I recognize him at once. It

scorebook also showed two errors. I felt terrible, but the truth was staring up at me in black and white -- my errors counted too.

As we drove along the highway to Weiser, my mom must have been caught at another rare moment of not paying attention. Without any warning, a policeman just pulled us over and gave us a ticket for speeding. As we entered the highway again, I wondered how long it would be before my mom put the fact that she'd been speeding out of her thoughts, and would begin to lecture *me* on safe driving one more time.

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### Grapes of Truth

by Tristan McClaran

What happens when grapes of truth burst?  
Do seeds shoot into the unjust,  
boring into their minds like acid?  
Where does the juice go?  
It will be splattered: blood on stony walls,  
clear, and difficult to behold.  
There is too little extract to drink.  
Never enough, you  
must find your own.  
At last, the all-powerful sun  
evaporates dying truth into  
nothing but skin and,  
at its heart,  
a seed.

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### Stubbies

by Chase Johnson

*Ta-thunk... ta-thunk... ta-thunk... ta-thunk ..* the tapping rhythm accelerates at first. The rhythmic beat is set by the course-setter. Each type of gate controls the sound of its beat. Breakaway gates create more of a thudding sound, while SPM's (smaller gates with a softer hinge) tap out their rhythm. But no course can play music without a skier.

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I stand at the start of the racecourse. It is a typical day of practice. There are no atypical days of practice for me. No matter what happens, it is always the same. I could have heard the most terrible news, or I could have won the

is Juan Gonzalez. I watch his smooth, easy, yet powerful swing - - everything is so precise.

I watch him for nearly ten minutes, until he goes to his dugout. My eyes drift out to watch the outfielders. A boy trots past me. He is heading towards a small crowd of people. I follow the boy blindly, figuring that he is headed toward something interesting. When I arrive at the crowd, I peer over a man's shoulder. A short fat guy is signing autographs. He hardly looks like an all-star, but I get his autograph anyway and head back to my seat. When I ask my uncle whose autograph I have, he replies, "That is Wendell Kim. He is a real crowd favorite." I could see why. Rather than sitting around chewing tobacco, he talks to the fans.

When I am an old man, I will pull out my old Boston Red Sox program and show my grandkids the autograph. We will eat hotdogs and I will describe my first trip to Fenway Park. Instead of repeating the same old boring story about Kim being the most valuable player in the all-star game or something, I can say, "Wendell Kim was the third base coach, and he was a good one too."

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lottery - - it makes no difference. Once I hit the first gate, I lose track of time, stresses, and everyday problems. I am taken into the rhythm of the course.

Today we are on the steeps. The course starts out straight where the hill just tips off. I stay quick and forward. *Shhh-ta-thunk ... Shhh-ta-thunk... Shhh-ta-thunk... Shhh-ta-thunk... Shhh-ta-thunk*. Short quick turns. *Click-clack-thunk-thunk*, I go through a hairpin. Out of the hairpin, it gets turny. *Shhhhhh-thunk... Shhhhhh-thunk... Shhhhhh-thunk... Shhhhhh-thunk...* just as I am absorbed in the rhythm of the course, *shhhhhhhhh-.....*. I wait for the *thunk*, but it isn't there.

It is a stubby. My coach just doesn't understand. I ski to the rhythm. I always wait for the *thunk*. Without the *thunk*, I hold my edge just a little too long or too short. And I am left out of rhythm in a course that doesn't even rhyme.