

Upside Down

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Well, I was just a kid that day in 1931
When I saw the airplane circlin' in the sky
Those planes were still a wonder, Thunderation! What a thrill!
Never understood what made 'em fly

There came a spurt and sputter and the airplane headed down
We all ran to the field outside of town
I got there tired and breathless just in time to see her crash
I was so scared - I never made a sound

And it was Upside down
Doin' loop the loops and barrel rolls
Upside down
Flyin' higher than a dream
Upside down
Walkin' wings to make the young girls scream
Greatest thing our town had ever seen

Clyde Pangborn was a young sensation seeker, we all knew
A barnstormer with more tricks than a kite
Then a Tokyo paper promised fame and fortune to the first
To make a non-stop trans-Pacific flight

They set off on their journey on a clear October day
To save on fuel they dumped the landing wheels
Then high above Alaska - Pangborn walked the icy wings
And with frozen hands tied dangling rods of steel CHORUS

Instrumental chorus

Clyde Pangborn and Hugh Herndon flew from Samashiro Beach
Miss Veedol was the monoplane they flew
For over 40 hours to Wenatchee's landing field
Where they circled in the sky so clear and blue

I tell you, I was there the day Clyde Pangborn came back home
The plane slid down the field and tipped her nose
Then we saw two grimy pilots walkin', smilin' to the crowd
I yelled so hard it hurt down to my toes CHORUS

Notes:

The Wenatchee Museum has a wonderful exhibit on the Pangborn-Herndon flight, which includes their plane's bent propellar. Newspaper editor Wilf Wood's recollection of seeing the plane circle overhead as a boy provided additional inspiration. Clyde Pangborn did walk the wings above Alaska to release the rods which could have caused serious damage upon landing.