

Deathbed Confession

“In 1971 a man calling himself Dan Cooper hijacked a plane from Portland to Seattle, demanded parachutes and \$200,000 in cash, then jumped into the night with the money, never to be seen again.” — fbi.gov

So little seemed to be at stake.
The bomb was real; the threat was fake.
Neither was difficult to make.

And I was in my element,
or nearly there. Yes, the descent
was cold, but warmer as I went,

and yes it was coal-black and raining,
but I had uppers and my training.
I've spent my whole life not complaining.

When I could see the woods I wandered
out with the twenties, which I laundered,
safety-deposited, and squandered,

and with the oddest thing, a name
I'd paid for but could never claim,
a private joke, my private fame.

That's been the hardest part: denial —
remaining of no interest while
the Bureau opened up a file

on every former paratrooper
who in his final morphine stupor
discovered he was D.B. Cooper.

I'm D.B. Cooper. There, I said it.
It's decent work if you can get it,
but it pays cash. There is no credit,

or blame, or pity in thin air,
and I've spent forty winters there.
I'll take whatever you can spare,

although I don't suppose the guy
whose last confession was a lie
deserves it any less than I.

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