

A hand is shown holding a small, vintage-style orange biplane against a bright, cloudy sky. The biplane has two sets of wings, a propeller at the front, and a tail section. The lighting is warm and golden, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The background is a clear blue sky with soft, white clouds.

# FLYING AND FALLING

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**JAN RUDZINSKY**

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A BOOK FROM THE HEART  
TO THE SKY AND BACK

Jan Rudzinskyj

# **FLYING AND FALLING**

**Book from the heart to the sky  
and back**

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„Biplane? I want it,  
Because I want to travel through time...  
I want to feel the wind when I fly,  
And I want people to look, to see,  
To know that glory still exists.“

Richard Bach

## Acknowledgements

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**... and Karel Faltus, who was the first on the scene when the Nieuport crashed.**

My apologies to all I have forgotten, I am already sorry for that, and will be even more so when I realize who you are.

## How to read the book

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This book is written on three levels or dimensions , which are interwoven together . The first is the storyline which is woven together as it flows through time like a plane moving through the air.

The second dimension records memories of certain moments, not only of my aviatric life, which will take you away from the main story, but nonetheless will surely add to it.

The third dimension or level is of my insights. They are highlighted in the grey text. You can skip them if you like, or read them when you fancy slipping out of the story for a moment, or simply read them as if they were organized as a book in themselves. The choice is yours.

I hope that it will be easier for you to read the book than it was for me to write it.

Thank you for buying it.

## Prologue

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I dived into this exceptionally interesting book head first. And I am glad I did.

Some chapters literally require this approach.

I immersed myself in the story and at times I felt I was gripping not the book, but the joystick. A breath in, a breath out, and yet another charged adventure. Jan has many unbelievable aviatric tales to tell and he serves them up to the unsuspecting reader one after another.

And perhaps that is why I read “Flying and falling” all in one go and was amazed by how much can happen in the air, and even on the ground.

Jan is no rookie, he has been through a lot and offers many opportunities for reflection which may have sounded awkward if written by another.

When someone falls to the ground from the height of two ten-story houses and survives, this is bound to influence his attitude to life. Most of us have not experienced anything like this, but here we can read about it first hand. And its well worth the read.

This book can be also read as a guide on how to start things that may seem highly improbable, even crazy at first sight

By the way, you will learn from Jan how to do.

And now something more amusing – well, it sort of comes from above too. Thanks to Jan’s book I am more clued up about what pilots sometimes need. I look forward to the day when I park my car by a meadow with a view, and as I revel in the picturesque countryside I see, instead of a butterfly, a plane landing on the green sward, and a chap taking off his helmet, striding towards me with a can in his hand, who asks me for a few litres of petrol, so he can get to his destination.

And as I syphon the petrol from my car, I explain to the perplexed pilot that having read the book “Flying and falling” I am kind of prepared for such an eventuality.

*Lubomír Smatana, a reporter for Czech Radio*



## Chapter 1 – Before The Fall

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### Before The Fall

I woke up in the middle of the night with painful and inflamed big toe, with a single thought in my mind. “Don’t fly to Bratislava.”

I was sleeping in a room with several other people – I had been attending a tai chi course with some friends, by that time I had been doing tai chi for thirteen years.

I didn’t want to wake my friends, so I got up and went for a short walk down the corridor and then outside. My toe was hurting and the thought was even stronger than before. “Do not fly to Bratislava.”

Let me explain. At the time I was working as a pilot with The Flying Circus, which is made up of replica historical planes, which we flew them at air shows. I used to fly a replica Nieuport XI, a First World War biplane. It was Thursday night, and on Friday morning we were scheduled to travel to Kunovice, where our planes were temporarily hangared.

I couldn’t get the thought out of my head. But the more awake I became, the louder the voice of reason said “You can’t leave them in it. It’s an air show. You can’t just ditch them, they won’t be able to find a substitute pilot at such short notice in less than a day.”

On one hand the feeling I shouldn’t fly was very intense, on the other hand there was strong sense of responsibility, and also doubt. What if I’m making it up, what if it’s a hidden fear. To be honest I didn’t feel fear about flying. Not that I never felt it – for flying commands a certain respect – but maybe I didn’t feel it strongly enough. Yes, I was flying the Nieuport as no one

had ever done before. And now I know, it was not because I was a miraculous pilot. I'm not. It was simply that I truly love flying.

And then the doubts came again. "You must be careful this time, you must pay full attention to every detail." In the meantime I healed my own toe with just the thought that it was okay. The physical relief relaxed me so I went back to bed promising myself that I would be careful and pay full attention.

When I think back to that period of my life, I lived in a combined state of permanent fear together with the feeling of invincibility, or even omnipotence. It's ridiculous, isn't it? But that's how I see it today. Then I was unwilling to admit the fear, but today I sense how strong it was in me. But I was also aware of the power of the life force.

My visit to see Peruvian shamans and the practice of tai chi and chi kung gave me with a great amount of energy. My own experience confirmed my belief in my immortality and invincibility.

I could do anything, or at least that was what I thought. It may seem ludicrous but I had the proof of it. It was easy for me to tune into someone. To change their mood? To improve it? No problem. I was able to impress people so they perceived me positively. It took me just a moment to do it. To influence the course of my life and the lives of others? For sure, I could do that too. It was all based on the condition of faith and its two aspects. Faith in myself that things are possible and I can handle it, and the faith of others in me. So I had all that I needed. I moved in a close circle of people who believed in my miracles, so it was very easy. All too easy. I was under the impression that if I was doing well – and I was doing well in all directions – that it was all down to me.

Pride comes before a fall, as they say. The problem is that the proud person cannot generally spot their own pride. And if by any chance someone who dares to point out his foolishness or to open his eyes, the conceited individual cannot see it and won't hear it. It's a bit like a contract with the devil signed with your own blood. You get what you want but at what price?

The desire is so strong and the urge so compulsive that you don't realize what you're signing. It's so cheap, you cannot but buy it. If something is obviously extremely advantageous or too good to be true then it probably isn't,

### **DO I WANT TO BUY CHEAP OR WELL?**

It seems a nonsensical question, but I often think about it. How often did I choose the cheap option rather than the right one? Very often. And not only in respect of money. Energy and time are also an investment, and I often spent money in sales rather than getting the right thing for myself.

Let me give you a few examples: I bought a car because it was cheap, even though I knew I didn't want it because it wasn't the right one for me.

Occasionally in the past I would pick up a girl only because she looked available. Whereas there may have been a beauty sitting next to me whom I would have much preferred but I was afraid, and so I went for the "cheaper" option.

Ultimately though it was not what I really wanted. So I wonder why are “sales” so popular these days? We all know deep down we all know it’s a farce but most of us just go along with it.

Again, I ask myself the question. Do I want to want to buy the cheaper option or do I want to buy what’s right for me?

Each of us has our own answer.

What was the glitch in my case? I had acquired a lot of energy in a very short time and I didn’t know how to handle it wisely. Actually, I didn’t know how to work with it at all. Powerful sources can set in motion great events. But beware! You have to be extra careful with it.

You don’t approach high-voltage power line with bare hands.

I feel better in the morning. We set out in the circus Ford Transit to Kunovice. The empty factory was a sad sight, especially the twin-engine L-610 planes that were once the pride of Czech aviation and that were now taken out of production .

We picked up our planes and flew up to the airport in Bratislava-Vajnory to take part in a sad celebration. The airport was being closed and as a farewell they decided to hold an air show and they had invited our group.

On that day I did the pre-flight check much more thoroughly than I usually did. I couldn’t forget the last night’s premonition. I checked the plane and every part of it in an attempt to shoo away my feeling of insecurity. Shooed it away but I was not able to forget it.

There is a lot to check on a biplane, and pilots usually treat the pre-flight check as a kind of ritual. I checked the wings and the enhanced wires that hold the whole biplane together. The ailerons, the rudder, the elevator. It is necessary look at all the flight controls and also the engine. The engine is the heart of the machine; and this replica was fitted with a Rotax two stroke engine. It's a reliable engine but a thirsty one. And the Nieuport's tank is not exactly huge. The sound of German Trabant car doesn't exactly match a plane that pretends to be a historical one – but I am grateful that I can fly it. It has its charm and I feel myself to be the only one who truly feels its soul.

We got in the planes in sequence and set off. Taking off in the Nieuport is always fun. This replica Nieuport is 70 per cent of the size of the original. Sometimes it can seem really funny when the disproportionately big head of a pilot in a leather helmet is peeking out of the tiny plane.

Once I wore a white scarf. It's obligatory when you fly a biplane, isn't it? Actually, it's not. In reality it is completely different to the films I watched as a boy – with my mouth open and a great longing in my heart. At the back of my head I could feel some a turbulence that was playing with my long scarf tugging it and flapping it around, carrying on as if it had a life of its own.

The flapping and tugging wouldn't have mattered if the scarf had not gradually got tighter and tighter around my neck.

The Nieuport doesn't have a regulated elevator which makes it unstable, and so you have to operate all the controls manually the whole time. So I had to untie the scarf with one hand trying not to lose it.

This took superhuman effort and just before choking I managed to stuff it inside my leather jacket.

The next time I just skipped trying to be such a cool dude ..

I have many memories of flying the replica Nieuport XI, that small nifty agile plane.

It had a long history going way back to its origins in Australia, after which it was sold to the aero museum in Kbely and from there it was rented by the Flying Circus. I remember the time when I was training to fly this plane. It's only for one person, so I had to do it without an instructor.

Normally all the special characteristics are described in detail in the flight manual, but not with the Nieuport. Jump in and fly – that's the most detailed instruction you get. Okay. I sit with my eyes bulging. Damn it, let's not fool around. On the runway I give it full throttle. And the plane starts to drift off the right. Okay, I get it. I counter that with the rudder followed by the fins, to keep it straight, but to my astonishment, nothing happens.

Actually something does happen.

The plane is still running off course and when – control input – it starts leaning to the right, I abort the take off. Taxi back to the beginning of the runway, I wonder what the hell it is. I've never encountered this before. The legendary plane Zlín 50 which has 300 horsepower engine, a thoroughbred, can be kept on the runway with ease. With the Nieuport combination of small rudder and short fuselage makes it a completely different task.

I start again with a different approach. I increase the throttle gradually and very slowly but only up to about 50 percent and only when I feel I have enough air flow to be controllable, I increase the throttle fully. A Sixty five horse power Rotax engine is more than enough for a tiny plane weighing a hundred and

forty kilos. I am up in the air in no time. We understand each other immediately. If there can a harmony between man and machine, then it just happened. I don't know why. The Nieuport is neither obedient, nor balanced. He is his very much own person. He doesn't give you anything for free. Some days you feel that he is trying very hard to kill you and behaves like a wild Arabian horse, and then suddenly you feel connected – body and soul. A year before I flew a Curtiss Jenny, and though it is a beautiful and easy plane to fly, this synergy did not happen. With the Nieuport I'm completely at home. It's an ideal plane for areal mischief – and the Flying Circus shows are really all about aerial mischief, which I relish.

First I test the banking gently and I feel straight away it's right.

I try banking more steeply and this plane is willing and very agile. It can turn on a sixpence. There's going to be some good "fights" with it. With this maneuverability it's going to be just great. Pity, I can't do some aerobatic numbers. I wonder how it was to fly the original! Maybe one day, I will have the chance to test one. Maybe not. I must keep an eye on the speed. At 85 kilometres per hour he starts stalling and I can't go more than 125 kilometres per hour. The engine could let us go much faster and while descending I have to restrain myself a lot. I do a low pass over the runway and go to land. With a new aircraft it's always a special moment.

I'm pulling the joystick, I cannot see much in front of me – as it is usual with most planes with tail wheel – so I look to both sides to keep the on course.

I'm pulling up even more and I am waiting tensely for the moment its wheels touch the ground. The correct way to land is when all three wheels touch the ground at once. It is actually

like a deliberate stall, when I bring the plane to the angle of attack in such a way that the airflows ...yes, the mysterious airflows that carry the aircraft the whole time, the airflows just break off and the plane stalls. The art of landing is to get the airflows to break off just a few centimetres above the ground, so the wheels caress the earth and the passengers applaud.

So, when is this going to happen? I feel like this landing is never ending, even though its just a brief moment. Time is stretching out like a rubber band and then I land into the duvet. I roll on the ground and revel in the feeling.

It won't always be like this but now I'm extremely satisfied. I do several more landings and fly over a nearby field. Oh, there's a tractor. I can't resist it. I imagine I'm in a First War fighter plane I put the nose down and pretend that the Lewis machine gun above the upper wing starts barking just like in the Great War.

What's going on? Perhaps the breath of history has touched me. Normally I do not shoot people, but I had to try this. I sense that the plane and I have bonded.

The flight to Bratislava was fine and easy. The air was calm and the weather was perfect; it was a bit windy above the hills but that didn't matter.

We flew in an open formation. I stayed close to Karel in his Albatros C.V., a reconnaissance two seater plane.

The original version was equipped with a powerful engine, but Karel's only has a seventy five horse power Walter Mikron engine, which often overheats. True, the original was bigger and heavier but this one could really do with a few more horses.

We flew together slowly. Karel because he couldn't fly any quicker and I was going slowly because I was saving fuel. The Nieuport is a guzzler.



I usually stop for fuel but sometimes I can just make it.

That day we were supposed to get there without stopping. Sure enough, soon we flew past a well know transmitter on the hill and Bratislava was within our sight.

I remember one flight from Hradec Králové to an air show in Most. We set out against a strong headwind.

Flying into the wind will always slows you down in relation your the ground speed but that day it was especially strong.

Already on the runway it was very clear that it would be touch and go whether we could make it on just one tankful. So I took a ten litre can with a detachable spout with me just in case...

I watched the fuel gauge carefully and I was not happy at all about the speed the needle was going towards empty. I had to increase the throttle to make any headway against the wind but every notch up meant more fuel consumed. I will actually fly against the wind and not just hover above the ground but each notch up means less of fuel.

I felt as if I was driving a Ferat car that drinks the driver's blood.<sup>1)</sup> I myself seemed to be drained of blood. Planes have that peculiar feature – you cannot stop wherever you want to simply have a ponder. As the fuel disappears, so do my options.

I decide to deviate from the flight path and land in Roudnice. I poured the petrol from the can into the tank and all would be well. Roudnice loomed up fast. Turning the plane onto different course caused the wind to come from behind which added to my

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1) Ferat car is a car from a Czech horror sci-fi film *Upír z Feratu* (The Vampire of Ferat) about a car fueled by human blood.

speed. I landed into a grassy field and taxied to a petrol station. Because I didn't know how it worked there and I had taken the can. I didn't try to buy any fuel. What I had with me, had to be enough to get me to Most. I took it with me just to make sure. Alas! Our mechanics missed a small point. They gave me a can that I couldn't use, because there was an insufficient clearance to pour the contents of the can into the tank. The mouth of the tank is in front of the cockpit which is shielded by the upper wing. I found it difficult to angle the can so that I could pour all the petrol in.

By wiggling and juggling the can around in all directions, I managed to spill quite a lot. Oh, gosh... How much did I pour into the tank? I calculated whether I had enough fuel to get to Most. Slightly optimistically I decided to go for it.

If the dear wind didn't blow too hard, all would be well.

But it was not.

The wind didn't hear my prayers and became even stronger. Or maybe he did me, but it felt like playing a little game with me.

'Since you are too lazy to go and get yourself some more fuel, then let's have some fun.'

The Nieuport never takes off slowly, but that day with the fresh wind I was up before you could say Jack Robinson.

I ascended nicely, I can't deny that, but the countryside wasn't moving very fast. I didn't check the GPS just then because I didn't want any unpleasant surprises. I noticed the grandmas hoeing the beetroot field and I didn't seem too be much faster than them.

I couldn't hold back any longer, I had to check the magic box. The ground speed was a dizzying 50 km per hour, and at times it dropped to 35. I knew by then, I would make it to Most, but that

didn't stop me to thinking – maybe I would. But I didn't. I study the map carefully. Extremely carefully. In an open cockpit you can lose a map in no time. The terrain near Most had not exactly been designed by the Great Architect for emergency landings.

With a heavy heart I turned back into the wind which increased my speed and headed towards Raná.

The airport was below me and I landed immediately. It's a rather small airport and so I imagined there was no Aeroclub Raná. But any runway would do in these circumstances and there were some people there, so there was a chance I could get some petrol.

As I said before the Nieuport has a two stroke engine which requires a mixture of petrol and oil. This time my wish was fulfilled. A local pilot had a 20 litre can already mixed and let me have it. Fantastic, finally I had some luck.

The flight from Raná was easy. With that amount of fuel I didn't have to hold back and I gave it his head. I reach the wonderful 70 and at times even 80 kilometres per hour and that makes the flight much more fun straight away. I even caught up with the second, slower group of planes. So we were all able to land in Most together.

But the adventures of the day were not finished. There was a direct crosswind and biplanes don't like cross winds at all. They have very high centre of gravity, not very effective rudders and they don't have differential brakes.

There's nothing else left but to sit perpendicular on the runway, otherwise it would not end well. I was the last to land and the blasted wind changed direction for a moment and lifted my left

wing up so much that the right wing gently kissed the grass of the runway.

At the moment the plane is about to touch down the pilot is completely powerless. Well, maybe not all pilots, but definitely me. Fortunately it was a very short gust of wind and I was able to taxi to the stand – the parking area for our planes.

I will never forget that flight.

Bratislava called in and brought me back to the present. The air traffic control guy guided us easily to Vajnory. There was a fresh breeze and I chose to land into headwind. Vašek landed before me with his triplane Fokker Dr.I.

I have already said that biplanes and triplanes don't like crosswind at all. When these planes were the current machines and the pinnacle of technical advancement, the notion of crosswind didn't exist. Airports were completely different then. They were meadows with a mast and wind sock and the planes always took off or landed into the wind wherever it was blowing from.

Nowadays runways are in a fixed direction and the wind blows conveniently, or not. True, there are some airports when runways are made in a cross so you can always find an appropriate direction in which to land or take off.

The one in Vajnory was one like that. Unfortunately, today it's a housing estate.

The Nieuport landed softly and I taxied to the gate. This year we were in Slovakia for the second time. And we always attract a lot of attention with our historical replicas. Perhaps deservedly so.

A lot of people as well as journalists waited for us.

This was the final show of The Flying Circus at this airport which was soon to close down and so it offered a scoop for cynical journalists. And that time we didn't know yet how big a scoop it would be. After a while my colleagues landed. Vlasta with the Bücker Jungmann, who would afford me many wonderful experiences in future, Karel with Albatros, Dan with the Curtiss Jenny, De Havilland Tiger Moth and finally Petr with his own S.E.5a. I was a little jealous of him. I had a one of the two main parts in this year's aerobatic show. I am the goodie. This had originally been Petr's part and he was going to do it this weekend.

Never mind, I told myself, at least I could watch the show from the ground as one of the audience. Normally I was in the air most of the time, so I hadn't seen from the ground for a long time.

We are told to put the planes into the aeroclub's hangars (that was closing down too). It is sad. Instead of an airport there were going to be houses and blocks of flats. We met some interesting people. Especially an old pilot whose life story would fill several books and whose flying experience never ceased to interest me. He showed us planes that he had built with friends and which were now for sale. I can't say I wouldn't have been interested in the Piper Cub replica but I didn't have enough money at my disposal to even think about buying a plane.

I'm not someone who needs to own or collect planes and I cannot quite imagine what that means or involves. It's pretty obvious to me that it's not all moonlight and roses, as they say. I prefer to fly planes and for that I don't need to own them in the same way you don't need to own the cow to drink the milk.

Or at least that's how I felt then. My attitude was to change in future but I don't want to get ahead of myself.

We went to our hotel, or rather some kind of chalets, and then in the evening off to the hangar party.

Saturday morning welcomed us with calm and warm weather, ideal for an air show ideal for our kind of flying machines. We moved over to the airport, prepared the planes and taxied to the stand. The preparations for the show were in full swing. There was no reason to think that that day should have been any different to any other day. We had the general briefing at eleven and then went straight into our own briefing of The Flying Circus. We agreed exactly what each one of us was going to do. But in reality the actual performance is quite different and the reason for that is we don't rehearse enough.

When I joined the Flying Circus I had a rather naïve idea of how things should work but the reality took me unawares. But on the other hand I must say that from the point of view of the spectators the show we do it is very impressive.

Our air show is made of two acts. The first follows the pattern of a Flying Circus which you might have seen after the First World War. There were a plenty of pilots and surplus of ex military machines, which some of the pilots bought from the army and flew around in various countries showing off their artistry.

In the first part we shoot down balloons with our propellers to see who can shoot down the most.

Down on the runway a member of the ground crew releases balloons and our job is to approach them skillfully and then shoot them down. Of course it's just for show, in reality it's no competition at all. But pilots are vain and so we often race one another as if the reward was a gold medal and a whole group of cheerleaders.

Then we chase each other round the pylons – but of course there are any pylons. This is just a program filler. We fly around and pretend we chase each other. Well, Vašek does it for real. It seems to be in his blood, and his Fokker triplane is well disposed for this. Flying the triplane is like sitting on a cannonball, so I've heard. And it's true, as I tried one.

The second and main part of the programme, is a theatrical piece. Martin, the director of The Flying Circus, wrote a short story about a First World War where we fight for life and love.

On the ground there is a makeshift German airport and on the other side of the runway the Allies have their camp. The whole show is embellished with period music and matching commentary; we wear period costumes and drive historic cars. In the German camp there are also some infantry and of course a lot of pyrotechnics. It's a catchy fictitious story. Catherine, a pilot's fiancé, has arrived at the allies camp to visit him. I'm the pilot. So Catherine and I walk pass the spectators pretending to be in love. To perfect the impression I bought some cigars but I can't get myself to inhale the smoke. I can't quite pull it down into my lungs, it's too unpleasant. How anyone can smoke such a thing is beyond my understanding. Apparently with enough persistence you can persuade your body to like it – obviously not mine.

I say goodbye to Catherine and my colleague takes her away from the front line in a courier plane, a Curtiss Jenny. Maybe they get lost or just have bad luck but they are forced to land by the German Fokker, whose pilot is my rival in love Erich. The battle is on. When the news of Catherine's capture arrives, I jump into thef Nieuport and fly off to sort out my enemy once and for all. Other fellow pilots join me and we bomb the German camp. Before they realize what's happening their Fokker is already on

fire. It is really burning. We have one grounded model of this plane and each show we cover it with paper and it burns nicely.

Some of the German pilots manage to take off despite the mayhem, and we are in a full-blown air battle. There are seven, sometime even nine planes in the air. We can't really plan this and the best thing we can do for ourself is to keep your neck relaxed as we are twisting our necks in all directions to constantly check the other planes. We do our best to keep to the script as to who needs to shoot whom. The plane that are apparently hit, release some smoke and go to land. In reality we hadn't managed to shoot anyone down. Not yet.

The finale is between the Nieuport XI and the Fokker Dr.I triplane.

Because we have the sky to ourselves we don't have to watch the others and so we get into a real dog fight. The Fokker is the more powerful machine but the Nieuport turns more swiftly. Vašek has a model machine gun on board so he actually shoots but my plane only shoots from the loudspeakers on the ground. Unwillingly I follow the script that says I get hit and so have to do an emergency landing.

I let out the smoke, pull the joystick willy nilly, as though the plane was difficult to handle and I rev the engine so it sounds as though I'm in real trouble. After landing the German soldiers want to take me away. At that moment the triplane makes a sweeping pass – I bid my farewell through the loudspeakers and expect the deadly fusillade. Instead the triplane pilot salutes, flies around several times, waves a lot and lands.

The story ends, and all the pilots and soldiers bow to the applauding spectators.



That day in Bratislava at the briefing I was told, that my job would be simply to be of one pilots who would bomb the German airport. I knew that I was not going to play the main part in the story because Petr was there. But it took me by surprise when they cancelled me from the circus part as well as from the shooting of balloons. And that was too much for my ego.

“I always fly in the circus part so why not now? Okay, there is one more of us today, so what? Why can't we all fly? If we stick to a square formation on one side of the runway, it should not be difficult!” At least that was what I thought at the time. In the end I got my way. If we trekked such a long way to get here, it really wasn't good enough to fly just for 15 minutes.

It was show time. It is always like this – at first I have plenty of time and suddenly there is no time at all, and I have to hurry. I don't understand how this works but it's always this way. So I climbed into my seat, fastened the seat belts and tightened them to the limit, as always. That day it really paid off. I had learnt this from performing aerobatics, that when I was glued to the seat by the belts, I could feel and sense the plane much better.

I consider myself to be an intuitive pilot. Watching screens and flicking switches on and off doesn't excite me much. I love raw flying when I can feel the plane with my whole body. Flying for me is more of a present moment experience than a form of transport. In the future I will come to realize that I lack knowledge and experience necessary for longer flights and will have to work hard to fill in the gaps.

That doesn't change the fact that up in the air, I'm at home.

So, I taxied to the appointed place and I waited for my cue. I felt insecure, I felt fear. That was not normal, this was not good either. It's certainly not me. Something was wrong and I didn't know what. I crossed myself before take off, which was something I don't normally do.

END OF SAMPLE

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