

The Gull

I watch the seagull, soaring high
Sliding up and over
The gentle wind's caressing sigh
Now heavenward, now lower

Up now, and still higher up
Riding wind and feather
He and wind become as one
Down they swoop together

The marvel gently tugs my mind
To a new awareness
How like me this traveller is
In Mother Nature's fairness

The winds describe for him the path
On trusting wings he follows
As do I, as time unfolds
Life's unseen hills and hollows

Much has been said by many men
Men today and men departed
How man controls his life and fate
How destiny is charted

But look again at the silver gull
On random airstreams flowing
No trace remains of where he's been
No track for where he's going

Ambitious men their fortunes plot
Some minor and some vast
Fool's work it is, I say
The die is elsewhere cast

1981

Notes:

I wrote this in 1981, intending to use it in my remarks (as Master of Ceremonies for the occasion) to the 1981 Sir John Franklin graduating class. It was my intent to have it serve as counterpoint to all the advice the graduates were sure to receive that day about how they had to go out into the world and do their utmost to plan their lives and achieve their potential successes and rewards. But the guest speaker for the evening, Bob MacQuarrie, a former teacher at Sir John, a Member of the Legislative Assembly of the NWT and Speaker of the House, and a friend, had also prepared, unbeknownst to me, some verse as a part of his address. When he read his, I chose not to read mine, lest it be perceived as an upstaging of his. In retrospect, I recognized there was little chance of that as Bob, a most erudite, eloquent speaker and an accomplished author, would not have suffered in any comparison of his work to mine.