

POETRY

Alan Elyshevitz

FRIENDSHIP 7

[Transcription of John Glenn's Flight Communications (February 28, 1962)]

Not long before me there was a dog
And I sometimes wonder, Cape Flight,
What she made of her encasement.
Through these clouds I see only Wednesday.
Cape, I'm banging in and out. I recall
My training and my last real lunch.

Reading you 5 square, Cape, though
This craft is infested with sibilants.
Yes, I will override the 05g switch.
I will, if you wish, retract the scope.
Cape, my wife is beautiful when she
Rotates manually about her y-axis.

Going fly-by-wire. This is not easy
When faith in another may not be jettisoned.
And I can't help thinking of the up-range
Destroyer. Cape, do you believe in God?
Out here the void is speckled, I think,
With an old man's radiation.

Kicking in and out of orientation.
It's how I imagine the 3-foot waves
At the landing site as a lumpy mattress
Of hydrogen. Cape, is that affirm?
I've got nothing but an alloy's fingers
Holding tight to the landing bag.

Cape, I'm through the peak g now
Which feels nothing like an equation.
The capsule is flaming like a boy's
Science project. Altimeter off the peg.
I will follow your voice to a zero angle
Returning this shell to a mothering sea.