

3 SEPTEMBER 2007, Labor Day

I'm standing on the tarmac
about 20 feet from a Beechcraft 1900D
the captain and first officer
are doing an instrument panel check
before starting the great turbo engines

It's majestic where I am
I always think of how it would look
if I could film the starting of the motors
from 20 feet away
with the mountains, the American flag,
and the ever changing sky

Then, the captain gives the V sign
which means - May I start engine number two
I signal - go ahead and start number two
the great propeller slowly turns
as the motor combines gas, oxygen and spark
and with greater force it roars into full power

Such an amazing spectacle of raw energy
soon, the captain raises his index finger
I signal - go ahead and start number one
there is the hum, the propeller turns slowly
then, number one roars into full prop speed

I begin walking backwards
as the motors rally full strength
the plane is ready for take off
The captain holds up his right thumb
and I motion for him to turn to his right
and leave the gate

the sound and vividness of the aircraft
so near with such great power glides away
and I feel the prop wash against me
blowing my orange vest in the air
I walk toward the screening exit door
to make sure it's locked secure.

Back in the office, I telephone Harrison
and report on the details of the flight.
I enter the times on and in
into the computer reservations system
and listen for the crew to call in their
time out and off.

Sometime I think I should not accept pay
for what I do
since I enjoy it so very much
but, then again, I think
well, I'm almost doing that anyway.
And I smile contentedly.

-Howard Lee Kilby, Labor Day 2007 (Copyright 2007)