



No Visible Horizon: Surviving the World's Most Dangerous Sport

Joshua Cooper Ramo

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The flying life has always demanded a passage across the razor's edge. At any moment you could slip to the other side: a gas leak, weather, fire in the cockpit. Sometimes what made the risks particularly horrible was that you could watch your mistakes play out in front of you, as a chorus of guilt followed you down. Usually you survived and could describe this music to others, but none of you -- not even with a long and growing trail of dead friends -- ever stopped flying. That was the truly unthinkable thing.

In a good year aerobatics is one of the most beautiful sports imaginable. Pilots pull through impossibly elegant figures, twisting their planes at hundreds of miles an hour. The stress on their bodies reaches ten times the force of gravity, but this is nothing compared to the strain on their minds and the tension in their souls. In a bad year no sport kills more of its participants. To fly really well and to win you must depart the land of the possible and enter a place of pure faith.

In this stunning literary debut, Joshua Cooper Ramo has crafted a meditation on the seduction of flight and a passionate love letter to a life of risk. It is partly the story of his own decision, after a decade of casual aerobatics, to transform himself into a serious competitive pilot aiming to finish high at the U.S. national competition. He introduces us to some of the greatest aerobatic pilots in the world: geniuses like Leo Loudenslager, a mild-mannered American Airlines pilot who spent his weekends redefining what it was possible to do in the air with a plane, flying figures so hard they made his eyes bleed as he whimpered with pain in the cockpit; or Kirby Chambliss, the Arizona pilot who performed figures just inches off the runway and sent his plane shooting through holes in cliffs.

The classics of flight and extreme adventure, *West With the Night*; *Wind, Sand, and Stars*; and *Into Thin Air* have brought a poetic vision to their subjects. *No Visible Horizon* is an elegant and thrilling exploration, not simply of a pilot's physical battle against gravity, but of his dream of perfection and his quest for faith.

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