

Pull Out

—Monty Joynes

His worst combat experience
Came when a smoke grenade
Went off in his cockpit.
His co-pilot was masked
At the time and was able
To put the helicopter
Into autorotation,
Which banked the ship
In a spiral to the ground.

The incident occurred
At about fifteen hundred feet,
And accounting for a fall rate
Of about one-hundred feet
Per second, the pilot
Started counting down
Amid the smoke blindness
And the twisting free-fall.

A second after pulling up
On the stick, he struck
A sandbar in the river
With considerable force
But with no serious damage.
The obvious question became
At what number in the count

Did he pull back on the stick?
He admitted to a count of twelve.
At fifteen, he would have buried
The chopper under the sandbar.
The lesson herein is
That combat is no place
To be playing chicken.