

Mathoms from the Time Closet

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 12 Jun 2012

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6263>

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Tony Ellis — 12 Jun 2012, 09:11

I can't let this one pass without mentioning that *Against the Lafayette Escadrille* is not only one of my favourite Wolfe short stories, but one of my favourite short stories full stop. If I was called upon to compile a book of short stories, it would be in there.

Not a word is wasted, but you'd never guess it from the unhurried pace. Almost half of it is just an old man rambling on about his peculiar retirement project. Then the ground drops away beneath our feet. Suddenly it's a story about the magic of the early days of aviation, the American Civil War, the supernatural, love, loss, obsession... and bump, we're back on the ground again. But not in the place we started from.

(I don't agree, by the way, that this is a man who just thinks he was a German pilot. He's the real thing.)

Under "allusions" you might want to put "The Song of Wandering Aengus" by W B Yeats, which tells the same story with a similar beautiful economy. Interestingly, both works end on exactly the same word.