

SETTANTA VITE IMMORTALI
Olgiate Olona - 26 giugno



COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS REWARDED IN 2011 WITH
THE MEDAL OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC



Caro Nonno: In Memory of the Grandfather I Never Knew - TWA Flight 891

by **Angelo Capozzi**, June 26, 2020 (published on *medium.com*)



On June 26, 1959, at the hour of 17:33, a TWA Super Constellation bound for Chicago from Milan's Malpensa Airport exploded and crashed 12 minutes after take-off in an electrical storm near the town of Olgiate Olona. All 70 aboard perished, including my maternal grandfather, Leonardo Armanetti, originally from Bari, along with his best friend, Basilio Lombardi, both Italian immigrants living with their beloved families in Chicago, Illinois. It remains the fourth most serious air disaster in the history of Italian aviation. The people of Olgiate Olona constructed a memorial and have an annual commemoration ceremony for the "70 Immortal Lives".

Caro Nonno, how I have longed to know you...

Since those glorious summers of the 50's, your many trips to Italy, for family, for friends, for new business opportunities, long voyages by sea, New York to Genova, the *Andrea Doria*

But in the year of 1959, with Modugno's *Volare* still a top hit around the world, you decide to fly instead...

To fly, "Il Blu Dipinto di Blu"...

But that fateful day was hardly blue, the sky gave way to tempestuous forces of fire and heat, of the laws of drag and gravity. What were your thoughts as you felt the plane begin its tumultuous, fatal nosedive to earth? When faced with such an imminent death, who is present? Who is the observer? Who is being observed? Who is observing the observer? Who was Leonardo, in that moment? And your fellow passengers, what of them? Does it all end in a moment of *terrore*, or are we actually transfigured in eternity and bliss in that very moment of our passing, breathless in the wonder?

I have often wondered...

How it would have been to have felt your embrace...

To have appreciated your voice as you recount the magic of the stories of your youth...when you first saw the beauty of my grandmother, the woman you would choose as your wife...and your eyes that witnessed the birth of my mother...

To have savoured the aroma of you freshly cooked red sauce...

To have tasted your famous *baccala alla pugliese*...

To have truly seen and understood your gentle smile...

Would I have been the man I am now, or was there something in this passing that unleashed the spirit of your heart in ways unknown?

Indeed, all these years, amidst the love and laughter of the family table at yet another Holiday meal, we always remember you, as if your place is set, a full wine glass, shimmering in its magical, pure alchemy, a deep and glorious red, the cup of our redemption, reminding us of the illusion of our separateness...

Your blood flows in mine, your genetic code is inseparable, each lock of my hair grows grey according to your plan, each breath I take is yet an echo of yours...

I look in the mirror and see your shadow...

I walk down the street and I measure each step with your gait...

My voice speaks, and we share that same voice...

Caro Nonno... How I would love to have known you, beloved grandfather of my heart!

You, caro Nonno, and the 70 immortal lives! I speak to you with infinite gratitude!