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L’esprit

OUTING

Come, dandelion winter,
shed your coat
and run with me in warm-threat fields
buttered with yesterday’s sunlight.
We’ll sing to each other
in our off-key way
and pick the ungainly growing things
to remember our day by.

Elaine Ayers
senior
L'esprit
College Heights Herald
April 16, 1974

Co-editors: Valerie Elmore and Fred Lawrence
Artist: Roger Burchett
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Cover photo by Scott Applewhite

L'esprit is a literary supplement of the College Heights Herald published each semester. It began as a class project for a Problems in Journalism class and was first published in January of 1969. The name is a French term meaning spirit. The goal of L'esprit is to provide, in as proper of a literary style as possible, an outlet for original poems, short stories, pictures and art work by students and faculty of Western Kentucky University.

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A Hobbit Production
“A man who watches the clock generally remains one of the hands.”

—H. W. Thompson

**MEMORY**

Tick, tick, tick, tick ....
Solemnity incarnate in an old clock.
Tock, tock, tock, tock ....
The tone deepens, soars, lingers
on my mind.
Creeps across my face with feathered fingers.
Comes with stealthy silence from behind.

The silence screams with voices.
They echo in the house.
Where clocks run rampant, ruling over all.
The voices have no faces, speak no words
in structured form.
They float among the memories ever warm.
Keeping timeless time with clocks
that always run.

Sometimes I faintly feel the sun.

**DISARM THE DAWN**

By the numbers!
Arm your alarm!

Load and lock
one six o’clock
into your alarm clock.
Then tour for free
your mind’s menagerie;
until the alarm
gun-rises you out of bed
and shots you down out of sleep,
and you fall back into a foamy head.

Tomorrow you can disarm the dawn;
it’s Saturday and there’ll no work to catch up on.

—Robert Boone
graduate student

Before the Advent of the Talkies
squirrels move
like old-time movie frames
in the silent days
of Chaplin

—Marsha Shields
sophomore

Photo by Carl Kroll
AMOUNT TENDERED

The consumed stand in line
Meek
And not like Jesus,
At the grocery where I hate to work
When the consumed stand in line.

I never have to see
The brown government envelopes
Or play paper money
To know it is time to hate again;
Another hate shuffles up to my counter

And tells me
With dirty-nailed fingers
That sort the eligibles from a cart
And lay them like a bloodied penance
Before me.

Dog food is not an eligible
Every consumed has a dog
And none of them knows dog food is not an eligible.
I have to tell them.
Only taxable food stuffs are allowed

And the dog food is taxable
Just as pride is;
One can be discredited with a machine,
The other with a look—or no look at all.
The machine is not hated.

My machine is equipped with an easy mouth
That adds, totals, and takes
Without a wince in its humming.
It does not have to swallow whole,
And when finally thanked with ingrained gratitude,
Invite another consumed back for more.

Nancy Banks
senior

A HULK

It was unexpected.
The poignant Truth
is here. The thread is cut,
the candle snuffed out,
and the earthly chance
Passed.

I had waited for
Death with nothing
to offer. impatiently waiting
and unexpectedly caught
with no true meaning
to leave behind.

A babe was born,
a babe had died,
with nothing to leave
Behind.
The night of life had passed
leaving all strings untied.

Oh, for a second chance!
To enter that ship
and make a journey
worthy of a life.
To meet life
with a thought!

But the thread is cut
and a husk remains.
My contribution is
Note.
The proposed question
is answered.

Susan C. Smith Whitley
sophomore

"There is the sea—and who shall drain it dry?"

—Aeschylus

Roosting

I am perched on a roof of shale, under a beacon,
my talons gripping tight for balance into the edges of fins
deserted by hollow-eyed owners.
There is a buoy, which sounds for others
who sail toward harbors turned to stone.
Yet on clear days you can notice young eagles swim to touch
the buoy, like a man struggling to climb a mountain;
they disturb sleeping sea-gulls.
Their noble claws hold deep for a moment's peace,
their spanned wings provide shade—
I see myself and fly away.
"There is the sea—and who shall drain it dry?"

—Aeschylus

ROOSTING

I am perched on a roof of shade, under a beacon,
my eyes gripped tight for balance into the edges of fins
snarled by hollow-eyed owls.
There is a bicy, which sounds for others
who sail toward harbors turned to stone.
Yet on clear days you can see young eagles swim to touch
the bicy, like a man struggling to climb a mountain;
they disturb sleeping seagulls.
Their naked claws hold deep for a moment’s peace,
their spotted wings provide shade.
I see myself and fly away.

FEAR

Running hurriedly, chest heaving and sweating,
we finally arrive at the ocean’s edge,
stepping long enough to see
a host of gathered folk.
The waves continue to curl themselves,
swimming the shore of our security; both
give many warnings and signs,
swirling off of what lies beneath
the layers of burning salt.
Prolonging the journey,
trying to think out the situation,
we begin to sink slowly into the sand...
the refreshing water remains,
swimming swimmers.

Jerry Metuch

FOGGY

The view is rather foggy
Where blue mountains meet blue sea,
As day begins to vanish
Boats come in,
Young fishermen dream of leaving
With their coats and nothing more,
But sense that there will never
Be that day.
Old fishermen returning
With their nets and nothing more.
No catch for one more supper
Without bread.
As day begins to vanish
Where black mountains meet black sea.
Sails are trim.
And still the view is rather foggy.

Dan G. Parson, Jr.

Photos by Roger Leasure
COMMENTS TO BE RETURNED

WITH A SHEAF OF POEMS

Starlings sitting on black branches
of a winter tree
standing in a field of snow
are not a poem,
they're a postcard,
a pen and ink drawing
on rice paper.

Try turning the field
into a page
covered with black dots
Draw lines between the dots
and watch a shape
for which there is no name emerge.

Try drawing cartoons
in the upper right-hand corner
of your days.
Flipping them fast
like pages of a book
makes a ten-second movie
of your life.

And don't worry about
getting yourself into the poem.
You're always there.
Who do you think that shape
With no name is?
You're even in the flawed work
if only as a camera reflected
in the eye of an actor.

Dr. Jim Wayne Miller
faculty

AFTER GLOW.

Footsteps
on the stairs:
expectant,
asserting manhood
ascending;
delivered,
trailing blood
descending;
gaping at last-thought:
how much like Mother,
she looked
against the lemon-freshened reality
of sweat-wet sheets
just before
she castrated him.

Elaine Ayers
senior

MARILYN

She trembled
from fear
borne of herself
She wondered
who
and where am I?
She giggled
partly from fear too
but moreover at "Her Image"

She loved
as innocently as a babe

Crying, reaching, starving
for something concrete
she died
naked as birth
succumbing in her womb
of loneliness

Jim Browning

NIGHT

Lay down my children and sleep,
day has ended and night is here.
No longer the hurry of the busy day,
but the palm of peaceful sleep.
The harsh reality of the glaring days
slides gently into the illusions of night.
To end the pain of the burning sun,
to be caressed by the moon's gentle light.

Terry K. Tewell
junior

orbits
splitting the atom
cannot be as hard as
growing apart
love is the strongest bond
God ever made
and ever through the orbits of
time and distance
the natural rule of the heart
circles home.

Denise Newbolt
sophomore
Inside

Once I stepped outside the realm of my consciousness... just to see what it was like.
I floated away on a smoky puff of smoke, enflamed with the dazzling golden hue of the sun. That melted as I watched and poured itself on the land with a fiery ladle.
Then... just to see what it was like... I walked around the equinox seven times to see if it would improve my leg muscles.
It didn't.
But I did see Charles Lindbergh fly by on a cherry blossom. Fascinating.
Before I came home, I stopped to see the Mad Hatter.
He wasn't in.
But his cousin, the Pink Mole, served tea on the terrace.
Delightful gentleman.
It's a pity I couldn't stay longer, but the afternoon sun became quite hot upon my face. But tomorrow, in the meadow, I have promised to drink all the tea in China... just to see what it's like.

—Teri Matteson, Sophomore

ALL THE PANSIES

There's a Unicorn in the garden, Mother, eating all the pansies. I was brave and tried to chase him, but he just looked up at me. Mother, tell me what to do.

Go and tell your father, Andy. Such imagination for a boy who's given everything. Why can't he be like his sister? Andy, go and tell your dad.

There's a Unicorn in the garden, Mommie, eating all the flowers. I was frightened and he chased me. And I cried and ran to you. Mommie, make him go away.

Come and sit here by me, Candy. Such a trauma for my baby—For a girl who's only six. Why must life be such a trial? Candy, come and sit by me.

Honey, why's the garden bare?

—Don G. Pierson, Junior

THE CAFE

Bright white
Bright light
Veiled by years of cobwebs and grease.

Black coffee
Youthful lady
Smiling through gaps left by rot and fight.

—Hedy Fischer

CAFE
HOW I WROTE A POEM

when I decided to write a poem
I went out and wrote down everything I saw—
only when I got home to take a look
it seemed misguided.
so I ripped off the blouse
of this old woman I had sitting on a swing
and stuck a dead baby at her breast,
and I grabbed the marker
that went with the dead baby
and hitched it to a "just married" sign;
then to dress it all,
I shook up the extra words
and pitched them out on paper
so the world looked like a crap game.

Snake Eyes.

STORMS
Silent wind, soft quietness,
then sudden brilliance and the
rain beats patterns against the
dry dust.

Deborah Geize
junior

untitled

funny
what silence can do
when I'm lying here
alone
and all thoughts of you
echo
in the coldness of this
little world
I've tried to fill
with
memories of you....

Cheryl Spalding
sophomore

ANESTHESIA

like a blind voyeur
or a sniper no one fears,
I am important
to feel any pain
but my own,
a bundle
loosely wrapped,
of nerves
without endings,
half dead or better.

Elaine Ayers
senior

The Wind Sings to Me

The wind sings to me at night
And almost keeps me company.
When you're not by my side.
Endless stars seek to show
The direction in which I might find you;
They all point to my heart.
Dying seconds of a recent memory of you
Disappear like a nighthawk
in silent, diffused flight.
Then I pray that you become real to me
And not just the fading dream I see,
So I sing to the wind.....and it sings to me.

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