



Duane Herrmann

Distinguished Kansas Poet

• [E-mail](#)

Duane Herrmann's poetry has been described as giving, "an inside view of one who has overcome serious obstacles that have defeated many others. These include the social isolation of a rural farm, the challenges of dyslexia and ADD, and a traumatic childhood....He interweaves the natural world with profound mystical visions."

Herrmann has several collections of poetry published, chapters in several books as well as numerous stories (for adults and children), memoirs, articles and poems in various publications in a dozen countries and four languages. His book on fasting was recently expanded and reissued.

He was the 1989 recipient of the Robert Hayden Poetry Fellowship and Poet-in-Residence at Louhelen School in Michigan. He has edited several poetry anthologies and other publications.

Herrmann lives in Topeka, Kansas, holds degrees in Education and History from Fort Hays Kansas State University and has been a member of the adjunct faculty of Allen County Community College. A one-time librarian, and farmer before that, he has also been a full-time father of four and built the house the family lived in. He now works for the state of Kansas and has three grandchildren.

Family Plowing

I plow the paper with a pen
engaged as the family has been
in cultivation: sowing and reaping.

I plow the paper with a pen,
in a solitary field –
it always has been.

My father was a farmer,
his father, and his before him;
we are plowmen in our rows.

I plow the paper with a pen –
rows of words across the space
in neat and even lines.

Though plowing is the family business,
my "machineries" now differ
for a different kind of crop.

But the plowing is the same:
long straight lines
across unmarked fields.

Originally Published in Potpourri Dec. 1991

Prairie Hawk

Over the fields and prairie,
creeks and tree lines –
endless miles
of countryside,
I survey my domain,
All MINE! All MINE!
the wind past my eyes
lifts me up or down.
A sound carries
on the wind
and I know
food is near.
I see motion
and swoop down,
the meal...
will be mine.

AH!
Life is good!



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Witness

The abandon building
gray
weathered wood and warped
still
erect, upright and proud
here
on the side of the ridge,
now
prairie all around – lonely
once
the seat of culture-leering
pride
to become “Americans”
this
was their school and center
when
they knew who they were
becoming.

Lightly Treading

To be respectful of The Mother
we must step lightly
when walking on her.

Our treading must not be
a cause of sorrow or disruption;
for others must pass too.

Behind us we must leave
a trail of Beauty –
in faces, places and planets;

A Trail of Beauty to resound
in Glory dancing on the waves
of human tracing.

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