



Harley Elliott

Distinguished Kansas Poet

Harley Elliott is a writer and visual artist in Salina, Kansas.

His books of poetry include *Animals That Stand In Dreams* and *Darkness at Each Elbow*, both available from Hanging Loose Press, Brooklyn, New York, and *The Monkey of Mulberry Pass*, Woodley Press, Topeka, KS.

In the spring of 2006, Woodley Press published his non-fiction book, *Loading the Stone*.

What To Do Around Here

take in a full pink
moonrise over prairie roads
where the strong south wind
smells pale and early blooming

if the moon makes you
walk up the ditch and
put your ear against
a telephone pole
you had better do it

a seven thousand fathom wind
drones in that old wood
deeper than darkening blue
twilight seeping west overhead

say hello to the ghost of birth
and the earth keyed tight
to this ripe blush of spring

just you the moon
and winds voice in the
spine of a tree
you will think something
seems wise about the moment
and you will know it isn't you

My Brothers Theory

As a child he carefully
reduced a clock to its parts
and in the beauty of
its entrails read the future.

Human beings were just
a necessary step in the evolution
of intelligent machines

requiring first the separation
of consciousness from
the moment being lived.
Click bzzzz what trained
my understanding of time

plugged me in to cellular
video virtual scramble?
So far so good
for the well-oiled spark.

My brother thinks
it will be a while yet
before the perfect servant
gains the keys to the house

and maybe it's just an illusion
that we continue doing our
best to be anywhere
but where we are.

Still the long shot calls.
Beneath it all in some
deep muscle of memory
the grass rolls on
the great drum beats.



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Walking Like Always

That night I drained out
of one world and walked in another
mugged by high noon heat

beside my friend walking like always
a plowed field where arrowheads
made long ago sometimes appear.

When I veer off to rest in
the shade of the old green pickup
he keeps walking but
wait a minute neither of us

owns a green truck and
how come his hair is now
a brilliant silver white.
Now I remember he died
two months and ten days ago.

I will wave him over
next time he wanders close
to ask how we can be here
and is the hot blue sky
as real for him as for me

but he does not wander close
gives only a glimpse
of a one-sided smile
from clear across the field
he can feel me getting it

watching from the shade
of reunion and farewell
while he continues
walking like always.

Appeared in HANGING LOOSE #78, 2001

Why You Should Read This Poem

Because it contains
no advice.

Because you're here now
somehow finding it
and completion is
its own reward.

Because it requires no
proof of purchase
ownership or identity.

Because in the
victory of excess
someone must travel
small and light.

Because it doesn't ask
you to save the world
but believes you will.

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