



# 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.

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## 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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