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The Vehicle, November 1960, Vol. 3 no. 1

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The Vehicle

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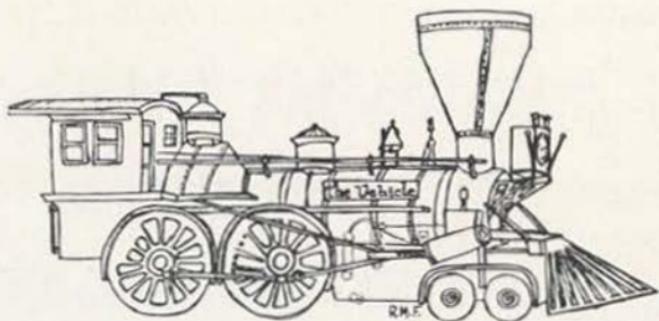
Linda Campbell

Don Blair

Thomas McPeak

Dan Ragan

Ben Polk



To Our Readers . . .

This issue of *The Vehicle* is our initial effort for 1960-61. In retrospect, we should recognize the initiator of a literary magazine for Eastern and area, Mr. Fred Miller, who began the venture in the spring of 1959. In the fall of 1959, the editorship was passed on to Robert Mills French, who maintained the magazine ably through the ensuing year.

Since *The Vehicle* has now become a university publication, we see an opportunity for full support from the university community, with students, faculty, and other interested groups serving as advertisers, readers, and contributors.

To Our Contributors . . .

We enthusiastically seek the best works of student and faculty writers, artists, and photographers. We ask all individuals interested in literary endeavors and the arts to consider our publication as a medium of expression so as to provide Eastern with an ever-improving vehicle of artistic impression.

Joe Bangiolo

Contributions . . .

All manuscripts should be typewritten, with the author's name on each sheet.

Contributions should be placed in the *The Vehicle* mail box in the Concrete Block Building or mailed
c/o *Vehicle* Editor, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois.

$$N' = N : 1$$

By Donald C. Blair

Man is men
And men is man.
 $1' : 1 + 1$
Men are man
And man is men.
 $1' - 1 : 1$

Adolf Eichman hates the Jews.
6 million' : 6 million + 1
The feeling is reciprocal.
6 million' — 6 million : 1

All men are brothers
And all brothers are men.
 $N' : N + 1$
All brothers are men
And all men are brothers.
 $N' - N : 1$

Consistency

By Donald C. Blair

Listen!

The old men talk of
youth.

The old maids talk of
birth.

The gopher sings of
oceans.

The worm yearns for
the stars.

And mortal man
hypothesizes
immortality.

Unto Me

By Linda Kay Campbell

And the hot ceaseless winds blow on, never changing, getting hotter and hotter until they can almost be seen against the hot shimmering gold of the Kansas sky, blowing, blowing, blowing. The wind no longer burns her roughened cheek, or chaps her gnarled hands. The once clear blue eyes, now squinting against the inevitable, are dull beneath the trim blonde brows. Blonde? Blonde does surely not describe the drab color of the scraggly, wind-blown hair and brows that perhaps, once, oh years, no centuries ago, had been gold against her soft flesh. But these are not the things one notices as she stands, facing the wind, the tear ducts just behind her eyes long since blown dry of tears, just as her heart is drained of God's love. It is her breath one feels as it comes shuddering up through the scrawny column of her neck from deep within the dry cracked soul. That very breath of life, that part of God which she has always used in defiance these last years.

She stands there beneath the wind-swept, golden sky that mocks her as it shimmers in the bright glare. The wind blows on with time's changeless unfeeling, catching her skirt and whipping her hair. She looks down, down upon the earth that finally claims us all and only bitterness is in her, and even that feeling is nearly lost to the power of the wind.

As she looks, her eyes see the mound of earth, now grass-covered and gray with the crude head-board and the indiscernible words engraved thereon. But her soul sees the fresh, moist, blood-red, Kansas soil as it had been when so freshly turned to make the now decayed old grave. It hears the deafening dull thud as each clod falls upon the coffin that holds her very being. Her husband has been dead these eight long years. Often she had come here to weep, now she only comes often. She had a purpose in coming here today; always she had wondered about the words on the head-board. She had wanted, ah how she had desired to ask the preacher what they said. But admit that she could not read? Never! Nothing a preacher could carve there would interest her anyway.

"Mama, will Daddy ever come back to us?"

Little Moll with her eternal question. "No."

"Then why do we keep coming here?"

"I-I don't know, I just come, and you come too; respect, I guess, respect for the dead. But Moll, honey," she says as she draws her child a little closer. "You're eight now, and you read good seeing as how you're in your second primer. Could you read them words to Mama, the ones there on the board. Read them careful now."

"It's good for to read; just a minute, Mama. 'Come—Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy la-laden, and I will give you rest.' See, Mama, I can read."

"Yes, Honey." She does not hear it all; she does not need to. Come unto me, and I will give you rest. She raises her eyes slowly to Heaven and instead of a golden, shimmering sky, she sees the face of God.

The Meek Shall Inherit

By E. J. B.

The quick first flash,
So bright it could be heard;
The purifying heat, so hot
It could be smelled;
The rich rumble of a dying
World as the final act.

Then the silence, gossamer
And vacillating, spoke not a word.
Now a tiny sand grain rises
by a small beetle impelled.
"Behold!", he thought, "for I am
Caesar and this is mine."

(Author's Note: There exists, in the remote Pacific islands, a specie of scarab that is remarkably resistant to radiation.)

The Infinite Quest

By Larry W. Dudley

Darkness is light on Palomer Hill,
Where distance is measured by time.
Heavenward eyes are seeking a thrill:
They hope to ensnare the sublime.
What's the red shift indicative of?
Can "prodigal suns" be our stars?
What kind of life exists above?
And what are those patches on Mars?

Chaos has form which physicists heed,
Transcending the limits of ken.
Analog ears are measuring speed,
While theories are rendered by men.
Parity fell; now what will ensue?
And where has Uncertainty led?
Newton was close, but now is untrue.
Immutable primes now are dead.

Living means death, and dying yields life;
But how did the cycle arise?
Where is our bourn, oh brougham of strife—
And what is its present disguise?
Why do we peer through infinite space?
Or why do we search for a rule?
Fear is the wraith which awe must replace;
And truth carves a sage from a fool.

Dreamer's Dawn . . .

By Mike Hindman

Just before the sun one day,
I took a morning stroll.
Yet as I walked in fog-bound air,
And swirled through misty clouds,
I found that whole and worthy parts
Of the landscape, thereabouts, had vanished.
Or had washed away . . . or sunken in the dew.
The thundering heavy architecture,
And shattering, glassy walls,
Were gone . . . dissolved or stolen,
By an early morn's mirage.

But as I walked, the sun hied forth.
And shining with a minstrel's smile,
He warmed the landscape thereabouts.
And chased my dreams and errors hence.

You roaring, crackling, quiet bore,
All full of smiles throughout the day.
Why can't you roll in other skies,
And ruin other dreamer's worlds.

Birth

By Nancy Coe

Crying, pleading, laughing, praying,
Reaching out for life.
It vanishes to reappear.
She waits . . .

The Lost Dutchman

By Donald C. Blair

Here on the side
Of this cragged cliff,
Near to an endless
Journey's dismal end;
With a broken leg
And a broken crutch,
And the deathless desert
In my burning eyes,
I can find no salvation
In my life of greed,
Nor any Eldorado
In my cached gold.

W. E. Noonan I

By Robert S. Hodge

Mr. William E. Noonan was taking his annual summer vacation in Seattle. He was living in leisure and enjoyment every moment of it as he had done for the last thirty years.

"Bill Noonan, you're livin' right! Yessir, livin' right. No worries and cares like the little people. No siree!"

He was dressed in his lounge clothes, reclining in the cool shade, sipping his after dinner wine. His thoughts were nothing but pleasant as he rolled his head to one side and felt the cinders grinding against his ear and matted hair. He stared at the row of rusty garbage cans, shifted over on one elbow, wiped his mouth across his sleeve and took another drink from the muscatel bottle. Then he flipped the bottle against the bricks sending myriads of iridescent flies humming into the cool alley air.

Pillowing his head on his wadded coat, he settled down for the night. The neon sign blinking in his eyes did not disturb him one bit; he had never been bothered by insomnia.

A Soldier's Ordeal

By Donald E. Shepardson

To the reader of this letter I ask that you carry my message to others so the world may know of my torment. Many a dark and lonely night have I pondered upon this tale in hope that I would escape from my prison to spread with my own voice, once so full, but now so feeble, this story of man's inhumanity to man. But that duty is not to be mine, for after today my soul may no longer dwell upon this earth. But enough has been said, my unknown friend, of your responsibility, for the haze of this fateful June dawn appears through my window signaling that time is short and the moment I have feared for so long is, with each tick of the clock, walking closer with an ominous gait. Now I will begin my tale of what has been and what is to come.

For three weeks I have been hustled about this camp like a robot, in and out of assorted lines for various purposes, leading to my final integration into camp life. Although my pride resented this constant and bewildering shuffling about, I could always relieve my pent-up emotions, if only for a moment, with the thought that my lot was not yet cast into the abyss of those other poor devils. And they were poor devils, for I had seen the steaming caldron in which they were forced to work at a constant darting pace. Each day the temperature soared to ninety degrees and beyond, its stifling pressure upon the human flesh increased tenfold by the sickening humidity which allowed not a drop of sticky sweat to evaporate, leaving the exhausted victim gasping and groping for a breath of fresh air. And soon, very soon, their ordeal is to be mine; there is no escape.

Listen!—I hear footsteps coming down the hallway. Is he coming for me now? Oh, please, not so early. Perhaps if I close my eyes and go to sleep he'll go away. No—I can't wish him away. CLUMP, CLUMP, the heavy boots thud against the wooden floor. My heart quickens; my muscles are tense; tiny beads of sweat form on my brow as I begin to tremble. Only with extreme effort can I continue to

write. CLUMP, CLUMP, he draws nearer. I feel his presence at my door. What's he waiting for? Why does he torture me so? I feel the volcanic impulse to scream out, "Come and get me you dirty bastard," but the fear of what will happen if I do silences all sound in my quivering throat.

Others have resisted only to be collared and brutally cast into the murky chamber of the Commandant to receive a violent interrogation. For hours of eternal length his raspy voice hammers in the ear of his distraught prisoner, broken only by intervals of sardonic chuckling.

I listen intently for the slightest noise, a voice, or even more so, his footsteps fading toward the exit of the hall.

"What are you doing up at this hour?" asks an unfamiliar voice from farther down the hall.

"Just checking the gauges, wouldn't want any of 'em to get loose, you know," replies my would-be pursuer.

"Yeah, it'd be yer ass if they did."

Oh, that was close. I slump over my rickety table, temporarily exhausted from the nerve-racking strain, happy that my hour has not yet come. A smile forms on my face and I almost want to laugh with the silliness of a child.

But the pleasure is short on this morning, for soon fear returns to blot out all happiness with me. Once again I look back upon those who preceded me through the great ordeal. I see them stumbling from work, their olive-drab uniforms drenched by the sweat of their labor, their shoes coated by slimy grease, their pathetic faces gaunt and hollow eyed, not the faces of men, but of zombies. Those who live on the first floor stagger to their room and fall as bricks upon their cot while their less fortunate comrades climb slowly up the stairway, each step an agony, lunging and falling forward until they reach their rooms.

Again I'm jolted from my thoughts by a noise from the hall. My eyes dart across the shadowy room. It's 3:00 A.M. and even the luminous hands of the clock seem to be laughing at my plight. Soon, very soon, my ordeal will begin. CLUMP CLUMP, CLUMP CLUMP, those horrible footsteps approach. Now there is no prolonging, no hope, now—there is no escape. My time has come. The Charge of Quarters is to carry out his wicked assignment. He's standing before my door, pausing to read my identifying name plate. I feel those beady charcoal eyes burning through the door, searching me out. I begin to panic, my muscles lose all

feeling; cold, clammy sweat pours from my entire body. Instinctively I want to lurch toward the barred window, but my limbs are helpless. Where, where can I hide? I want to kneel at the feet of my captor and sob, "Please, I beg you, don't take me," but I know he'll only answer my plea with a sadistic smile, and then drag me, screaming and pleading, to the caldron. BANG, BANG, BANG! his fist smashes against the door. I jump back, pinning myself against the back of the chair, my face twisted in a frenzied look of horror. What can I do? There must be an escape.

"Hey, you in there," he yells in a loud gruff voice, sending a thousand pin-points into my spine.

"Yes, sir," I answer meekly, my voice wavering.

"Get the hell outa bed, you got K.P. today."

Personal Possession

By Mary Beil

Dimpled and dainty
Soft yielding flesh,
A baby's hand
Into mine mesh.

Gnarled and knotty
For all to see,
The lines embedded
As trunks of trees.

Youth then age
The fate of man,
Written clearly
In each hand.

The face belies
Not so the hand,
Here, it's revealed
The diminishing sand.

No two alike
Can this mean—
God will fulfill
Each and every dream?

Thine The Glory

By Donald C. Blair

Pap never worked a day in his life that I can remember. It was always Ma that we went to when we needed anything. When I say "we," I include Pap. Ma made all the money. She took in washings and ironings and acted as midwife when the women in the next holler were having their youngins, but this never brought in enough to hardly keep us in flour and bacon. Somehow, though, she kept us in school and got us the pencils and stuff we needed. She even managed to furnish Pap with enough white mule to make him more or less harmless.

Ma was the steady one, always around and handy when anything went bad. I mind the time Big Jim Thrasher caught us raidin' his sweet corn patch. There was three of us there that night. Pap put us up to it. He even went along a ways, till the alky he'd been guzzlin' got to him and he fell into the crick. It was the middle of July so after John and me made a chain of ourselves and let little Nick down the six foot bank and he told us Pap's head was out of the water we just let him lay there.

Anyhow, Big Jim caught us and came out of the house swearin' he'd horse-whip ever one of us. John and me held our heads and just hid amongst the corn stalks, but little Nick got scared and started to bawl and Big Jim caught him and cut stripes on his legs with a hickry withe. We gathered him up after Big Jim let him go and took him home. Ma cleaned him up and he went to sleep in her arms.

She told me and John we'd better go and get Pap, so we went back to where he fell in and hollered. Pap yelled back a string of cuss words from down the crick a quarter mile. The cold water in the crick had brought him around, but he was in no condition to climb the bank so he just stumbled around in the wet dark and got so mad he even lost his jug. Me and John fished him out and drug his cursing carcass back to the house.

That was the only time I ever saw Ma really down on Pap. She met him at the door with a piece of kindlin' and

started whackin' him with it. That stick was about a yard long when she started in, but when she finally wore herself out there weren't much more'n stub left. She went cryin' off to bed and John and me crawled out from under our cot, where we had hid when the ruckus started, and tried to help Pap.

There weren't enough leeches in the crick to take care of all his bruises, cause twixt fallin' over them rocks in the crick and the laboring Ma dished out the old man was pretty well black and blue all over. We figured Ma wouldn't much want him clutterin' up the floor in the mornin' so we lugged him out back and threw him in the wood shed for the night. Then we went down to the spring and fetched him another jug of whiskey so he wouldn't feel too lonesome when he woke up.

When John and me went to sleep that night I mind that both of us tried to bury our ears in the straw tick to shut out the sound of Ma cryin'.

The Thorn

By Jan Holstlaw

The thorny path to wisdom
Must be trod by some.

I am one . . .

One to know the meaning of
Such endless, futile love.

Shod my feet with velvet,
Smother the pain of the thorn.
Naught shall clothe my heart,
For here the sting is borne.

A Lord's Day Morning

By Linda Campbell

Through unpainted windows,
The Lord's Day morning light
Shone in,
Hiding the old pews' plight.

It brightened the bare heads,
And illumined the altar;
So the sheep
Could pray without falter.

It caught the piano's keys,
Dried the dewy flowers
Brought as
A gift from Christ's powers.

And as it shone
Into fifty pairs of eyes;
Some near death,
Some new-born and unwise.

It also shone on
Birds, modern cars, trees
And filtered
Down through fragrant breeze.

Upon the graves as they
Lay so solemnly still.
Their prey gone . . .
Dwelling on Zion's Hill.

It is God's love
Shining through souls with light,
Lifting high,
Making each Lord's Day bright.



Observations of a 6-Year-Old

By Tom McPeak

Dogs are dogs because they're dogs.
Ask any guy you see.
And cats are cats 'cause dogs chase cats.
It's just like A. B. C.
And frogs are frogs 'cause frogs
Are legal game in season.
And dogs are dogs.
I got no other reason.

Jewels of Time

By Judith Jerints

The glowing day,
A gentle love
The casual embrace of a moment's bliss.
A kiss . . . of warmth?
Or without the spark
That is kindled for a
Lifetime?
How pretty my reveries grow,
Surrounded by the softness
Of memory.
Dusty jewels found in an ancient
treasure box,
Among the long-forgotten keepsakes
Of a lover's dreams.

Night
Steals upon the heels of Light,
Cloaking my dreams
In ghostly dark
Reality.

Lavender

By E. J. B.

How young you were . . .
And how young I.
Love was fire,
And hate a sigh.

Only touch,
But don't caress.
Just love,
And don't possess.

This idiot's game,
Played in a whirl-wind.
An over-fanned flame,
Breathed a spark's brief end.

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