Life Through My Eyes

Heather Nicole Casler
Western Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwu_honors
Part of the Creative Writing Commons, and the Higher Education Commons

Recommended Citation
Life Through My Eyes

A Collection of Poetry
By
Heather Nicole Casler

Western Washington University
Honors Program Senior Project
Winter Quarter 2001
HONORS THESIS

In presenting this Honors paper in partial requirements for a bachelor’s degree at Western Washington University, I agree that the library shall make its copies freely available for inspection. I further agree that extensive copying of this thesis is allowable only for scholarly purposes. It is understood that any publication of this thesis for commercial purposes or for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature

Date 7-13-01
A Verdict

Smoke abounds, crime all around
All types of races, no smiles on faces
Looting and riots, because of the bigots
Justice miscarried, Mayor is harried
Nobody realizes what's going on
Till all the good people in L.A. are gone.

Killed by the fighters,
Fighting for justice
Because of the bigots,
Who say they've discussed it
Behind a closed door for days and days
Brewing their plot with their racist ways
And when everything's
Been said and done,
The police were acquitted,
And justice... not done.

1993
Listen

“Not that day, I can’t” she cries
“The day of finals?
Oh no.”
I do not understand
I speak to her
And try to make her
LISTEN!
I say
“It does not matter.
Grades are not important.
They never have been.
In this life, you will
Do
What you want to do
If you truly wish it.
For if you act
With your heart
Your
PAST
Does not matter.
Not at all.
You must be who you were
Meant
To be.
And nothing can stand
In your way.”
She looks at me
With eyes of steel.
Not cold, but unmovable.
She will not
LISTEN!
And will never understand.
Trapped in the cold
She is
And does not even
Know it.
I weep for her.
For her life.
It is not me she won't
Listen to.
It is her dreams.
They cry out as they
Continue to be ignored
And crushed.
The sound is so sad
To my ears.
She cannot hear them.
She won't LISTEN!
And now they are gone.

1995
A Rainy Night On Cornwall

Through the twin metronomes
Sweeping before my eyes
I see flashes of light
Houses, cars, vacant lots
Calmly discussing
The state of the country
Or some such trivial thing
Suddenly, a small shape
Leaps from the darkness
I point, yelling stop
At the moment he brakes
We watch as the opposite car
Is also stalled by its
Driver's compassion
And we all watch together
Hearts beating fast with fear
For the brave creature
Scurrying through the opaque
Beams of two threats
And just as we begin to
Slow our hearts and
Speed our cars
To their destinations
The small raccoon
Disappears into the darkness again

2001
Memories

A whispered thought,
A lover's glance
The world is still
Filled with romance.
A baby's laugh,
A bird at dawn
The things that keep
You smiling on
Day by day
And year by year
We remember the things
That we hold dear
And when we no longer
Can remember,
We become sad
But there's hope yet
For memories that time
Takes away from us,
Time will never forget.

1994
Whispers of Los Cabos

1

Wind in my hair as I descend
The long staircase towards earth again

Bright sun making me squint
As the long walk to the terminal begins

Standing in line to gain admittance
I fidget and sigh with excited impatience

A stamp of my passport and I walk through
To gather my bags and discover what to do

A tense test of nerves as I press the button
But a green light appears and my worry’s for nothing

Hotel employees cry from all sides
But we pass straight past and are then outside

Boarding the van with our bags thrown on top
I now worry for safety from the driver who prefers not to stop

We pass desert and cactus, poverty and wealth
Broken down buildings and spas for your health

And then the van does stop and we alight
Take our bags, check in, and prepare for the night
And all the world suddenly seems quite alright
Leaving the comfort of my five star excess  
I walk down the street in American dress  

The vendors and hawkers all flock nearby  
With their pushing and prodding, crying “buy buy buy!”  

Amidst the exploding commercialism here  
I also see poverty that would cause many tears  

Mothers on blankets along the dusty road  
And children selling Chiclets in their mother’s tow  

The ironic contrast seems to escape  
The locals who smile, seeming unable to hate  

I purchase gifts for my friends and myself  
Doing a terrible job bartering, but perhaps that’s a help  

Streets filled with life, so easy to enjoy  
Bars with six-hour happy hours where girl always meets boy  

The traffic is crazy, horns honking like dog barks  
And when a taxi is needed, no matter where it parks  

Dust mixed with silver and Chiclets and beer  
Shops and restaurants, hotels and piers  
Invisible people serving guests who appear once a year
Packing my sack I choose necessary items
Sunscreen, a book, CD player, gum

Down to the pier we trek with our possessions
Over-preparing for our short hour-long session

Boarding the boat that will carry away
Our bodies and money on this hot sunny day

Packed like sardines being watched by huge pelicans
The engine sputters to life and our journey begins

Twenty faces stare down at a blue rectangle of glass
Oohing and aching at each fish we pass

A history and geography lesson in the middle of Spring Break
Is delivered through a thick accent that reminds, tips he'll take

Passing by sealion colonies that bark like dogs
That bark like horns and float like logs

Pulling up close to the burning sand
We each splash into the ocean, helped by a hand

Finally aground on the isolated beach
After sightings, rocking, and boaters that teach
On Playa D'Amour relaxation is reached
Night breeze carrying scents of flowers unknown
Strolling along in a short, pretty gown

We hear the soft music before it appears
Then rounding a corner we know we are here

Waiters in white shirts, black pants, aprons
One pulls my chair and then pushes it in

The lighting is soft, an ambient glow
Through the open ceiling stars shine down on diners below

A fine selection of Italian cuisine
In this Mexican town with beaches pristine

As we dine on our food and each other’s eyes
We are serenaded sweetly in Mexican guise

We watch as at a nearby table of four
Coffee is made with alcohol that flames as it pours

Completing our meal of lasagna and beauty
We leave a fine tip, for each man did his duty

Strolling away we know we won’t forget
The finest Italian food we ever could get
From this Mexican place named for Romeo and Juliet

2001
My Darling Ben

I could not write a poem for you.
It seems the Muse has quit my pen.
    My words seem small and trite
    Compared to the feeling within.
For how can I express a love more
    Beautiful than the world has seen
    With simple human words that try
    But aren't enough for the love to be seen.
You are my moon, my stars, my sun.
    You are my breath of life.
And no mortal words could e'er describe
    My joy at becoming your wife.
There are no words yet thought by man
    That would do this feeling justice.
So therefore I cannot describe, but
    Only ask you to believe it just is.
        A life apart from you
    Is unthinkable to me.
All troubles depart from my soul
    With a simple touch by thee.
And did I tell you yet today
    How much I truly care?
If I have not, forgive me, and
    Be assured the thought is always there.
The day of your birth will ever remain
    My favorite day of the year.
For this is the day that my grief went away,
    When the angels brought you here.
I could not write a poem for you,
    Though I tried with all my might.
Therefore, my simple birthday wish I give:
For you to enjoy this night.
I fear my pockets are empty these days,
So present have I none,
Only my pledge to love you still
When all memory of mankind is gone.

1999
My Mother’s Struggle

A quickly jotted email appears on my screen
From a mother whose face for eight months I haven’t seen
“Just wanted to let you know…”
Is the usual occasion
For this short note appraising me
Of the latest occurrences
“The cats are fine, the lizard is sick…”
How she handles it all is an amazing trick
I imagine her days, full from dawn to dusk
Running here, running there, doing all that she must
A husband leaving on frequent business trips
A teenage son with thoughts of girls’ lips and hips
A dog, three cats, an iguana, virtual zoo
A fulltime job and housecleaning to do
I often think of my mother’s struggle
How I never really helped
She always does things for the rest of us
But hardly at all for herself
Yet feeling sad for her plight in life
Is not the correct thing to think
For despite what the rest of us choose to believe
My mother’s struggle is her strength

2001
Hum of Technology

Hum of technology
Surrounds my thoughts
Voices murmuring over homework

Glaring screen
In front of my eyes
Artificial colors, artificial worlds

Dark grey background
Fake white paper above
Letters slowly materialize as I type

Hum of technology
Invades my thoughts
Voice in my head murmuring

www dot com
Control c, control v
What happened to turning a page?

I send my thoughts
Through email
To my friend sitting 5 feet away

Hum of technology
Brings us together
While ensuring we stay apart

Flat, square faces
Filling the room
Friendly, round faces hide behind them
Three emails a day
I send to my Mom
But weeks since I heard her voice

Hum of technology
Is it truly progress
To lose our humanity to machines?

2001
Living With Honor

Going through high school
Or college or more,
You can’t avoid the labels.
They surround you.
They overpower or empower you
Depending on if they apply.
Honors Program
Honor Roll
Honor Society
Honor Chords
Honor Graduate
But what do they mean?
If they do not apply,
Are you a lesser human being?
If they do apply,
Does that make you a good person?
Honor: is it gained
Through obedience to teachers?
Adherence to syllabi?
Avoiding procrastination?
When schooling is over
And you’ve moved on in life,
Will pieces of paper that say
Honor on them matter?
Or will you measure your success
Not by Graduation with Honors,
But by living with Honor?
Honor exists within us all
And can never be granted
On a piece of paper
By an institution.
We can all tell those who only
Received Honors
From those who live with Honor
Each and every day.

2001
Leaves Falling Like Rain

The hill standing watch over
This institution of knowledge
Is speckled yellow and red
Amidst its ever-present green.

The carpet of bricks and grass
Creeping throughout the buildings
Has become a thick and soft
Crackling carpet of leaves.

This unseasonal weather of sun
Is deceptive in its beauty.
Reminding us of what’s to come
Are the leaves falling like rain.

Golden leaves falling like rain,
Bouncing off sunbeams on their way down,
Blown by the breeze as they tumble
To protect and blanket the ground.

The omen of seasons changing
Rustles beneath our feet,
The promise of Winter’s arrival
And the evidence of Summer’s defeat.

1998
Live Your Life

Change can be scary
If you don’t think you’re ready
And everything’s moving too fast
You spend so much time making decisions
About life while meantime
Life has passed
Plans and progressions
Clog up your mind
And you don’t quite remember
The goal
You keep pushing and pushing
Trying to get there
Trying to get where?
You don’t know
And meantime while you’re
Pushing and planning
To make your life perfect one day
Your life is being lived around you
And you don’t even realize it’s late
Remember to smell the roses
And the cheesecake and hot dogs, too
For while you are planning
What your life will be like
Your life is happening to you
Take time to love your loved ones
Enjoy a sunset or three
Swim in the ocean and run up a hill
Don’t wait until your life is “complete”
Always strive for more
But only within yourself
Be content with what you have
But never with who you are
You can always love stronger
You can always be more caring
You can always learn new things
So live your life as it's happening
And enjoy what the future brings

1998