

Students in Waste Land

In *The Waste Land*, T. S. Eliot claimed that "April is the cruellest month." I don't know if he was thinking about university at the time, but I strongly suspect it.

For me, at least, the end of the academic year brought with it the end of an illusion which I have cultivated and cherished for many years — an illusion which I have guarded against the evil forces of Truth and Realism as fiercely as the Coca-Cola Company guards its secret formula, in the depths of some underground fortress in Antarctica or Mexico somewhere. Just think — twenty years ago they taught the world to sing — and now the Berlin Wall is gone! The power of soft drinks!

To be honest, I guess the University Dream was doomed from the start — which isn't to say that I didn't try my hardest to save it. It seems that ever since kindergarten, when the other kids were contented to play with blocks and nap, I've looked forward to the

day when I could blow that baby barn and bash brains with the big kids.

University, kids — the seat of culture and higher knowledge; the temple of the intellect — perhaps the last of society's institutions to remain dedicated to humanity. Or so I thought — but who could have guessed the awful truth?

"What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow out of the stony rubbish?" I don't know, T. S., I just don't know. To think that my grand intellectual temple was built with feet of clay! That "education" to most people here is just the stepping stone to a career! That I came, in my own naive way, in search of Truth and Beauty — and found instead the regional headquarters for the Future Pharmacists and Physiotherapists of America.

(Not that I have any particular bias against the Pharms and the Physios — the former, at least,

does have a useful niche in a well-ordered society. I simply feel that both of these are great examples of the trendy, fashionable, "in" professions which so many students are desperate to get into. Anyone who has observed the "We're Physios — you're not" attitude in action will understand me here.)

Truth time — how many of you are here studying things you truly love, things which you would study and enjoy even if there was no career prospect in them? No need to be ashamed — I'm quite aware that the economic reality is that few people can afford to follow their interests and desires. The point is that the old liberal ideal of education-for-the-sake-of-education just doesn't exist anymore.

Today's universities are the farm systems of the industries. I can just imagine the big corporations making their draft picks among the graduating lawyers

and engineers. (And to hell with the Classics majors!)

I turn the reader's attention to an incident reported in the Gazette a few months ago, in which the shooting of 14 women in Montreal was described by an engineering executive as "a blessing in disguise" because they would help attract much-needed engineering students to the industry.

"He promised a new start. I made no comment. What should I resent?" But there will be no new start — and nothing to resent. Because it is I who am wrong, for expecting too much of the school system, and of society.

Of course students are after dollar signs, and not knowledge and wisdom. The very words are laughable! And maybe 14 deaths are a good thing, if they help the engineering industry.

But still I am offended. Still I refuse to accept it, even when I see my best friend enrol in an unde-

sired science program in order to please his father who believes that an Arts degree is a waste of time and money, because there are no good jobs in it.

Is it so obvious that I have refused to accept reality? But it must be. Have I not interspersed my comments with quotes from T. S. Eliot? And am I not enrolled at Kings — an idealistic and foolish liberal arts school, if ever there was one?

I am idealistic and foolish, and maybe wrong as well. Still, that is my fate, and I accept and even love it. It's me against the mindless, heartless, corporate state — and they're not subject to revision. I will live the university dream — even if I am the only one to do so.

May you all have better luck with your dreams.

Shantih, folks. Shantih.

Troy Jollimore

p o p o n i o n

She got sealed in with a rat

by M.J. Hamilton

"Just say no" is my advice to any woman who is asked by a man from Howe Hall if she "wants to see the seals." This ordinarily would not seem like a come-on, but you never know what could happen. You could end up getting locked in the LSC (Life Science Centre). I did.

I had heard about there being seals in the LSC. I even wanted to see them. But I've sort of lost my urge to see them now.

You see, I met this really "sweet" guy from Bronson. We had become friends until that fateful night. One evening, he told me he'd walk me home and on the way he could feed his lab rat at the LSC. I said, "Sure." It was better than walking home alone. Well, it sounded like a good idea at the time.

This guy, who was a psychology student, was conducting experiments on this rat, he said. He even told me all about how vicious "Matt the Rat" was. It sounded like a logical story to me. When he opened the door to the room in the LSC where the rat was supposed to be, I was surprised to see a room full of empty cages. I looked at the guy. He said that he did not know where his rat was. Right.

When he saw how disappointed I was about not seeing the rat, he asked me if I wanted to see the seals. I thought that was a great idea. I had no idea where to find them, but he said he could

find them (although he said he'd never seen them himself). "No problem," he said.

The LSC is such a maze, I was lost in no time. I still do not know where he took me.

Finally we got to a door that he



thought would lead to the seals. I was getting excited. I would finally get to see them!

He opened the door. We walked a little way and there was another door. We went through that door and it slammed shut behind us. The sound echoed against the concrete corridor.

"So, where are the seals?" I asked.

"This way," he said confidently.

He helped me down a large step. "They're in there," he said, pointing through a crack between two doors which were chained and locked shut.

"Are you sure?" I queried.

"I think so," he answered.

I don't think that he had any idea whether they were in there or not. That was fine. But then I wanted out.

We walked on to the end of the

building where there was a big grey door (which was bolted shut, of course). We started back to leave, but the door that had slammed shut decided to stay shut. It had locked behind us!

"Don't worry. There's a way out," he tried to convince me. "The security guard will come by here."

I don't think he realized that the security guard, if there was one, wouldn't be able to hear us. We were in a corridor off the main part of the building. Then I looked carefully at this guy. Maybe he was a pervert that liked to seduce women in the LSC.

Maybe "Hey! Ya wanna see the seals?" was just a line he threw at unsuspecting and trusting women (like me). I think he saw me looking at him oddly.

"Don't worry," he said.

"I don't care what happens. I am not staying here the night," I said sternly.

"You won't have to. I'll get us out."

I looked at him again, this time checking out his physique. He was a big guy, but he sure didn't look like Superman or He-Man to me.

As we were walking down the corridor again and as I was wondering if I would freeze there overnight or not, we saw a door.

He tried the doorknob. Locked, of course. He knocked, but there was no answer. I pounded on the door and pulled at the knob and yelled.

As we started to walk away from the door, it opened. A very

surprised face appeared. It was some guy working late grinding gemstones. Thank goodness Dalhousie professors give a lot of work so that this guy was working so late.

He told us that we were not supposed to be there. He also told us that he was not supposed to let people through the other way out because it was "secret." But when he saw our dilemma, he showed us out.

My friend very sheepishly took me the rest of the way to Shirreff Hall, apologizing all the way. I just laughed at him. I told him I was going to write all about it in the student newspaper. I have only seen him a couple of times since "the incident," but I bet I will be seeing him again real soon.

Editor's note: The author assures us that this story is absolutely true.

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