

IN MEMORIAM PÉTER EGRI



(1932–2002)



According to the original plan the editor intended the present volume of *Eger Journal of American Studies* for Péter Egri to congratulate him and to celebrate the eminent scholar, the distinguished professor, the highly honored teacher and master, and his outstanding lifework on his 70th birthday. Fate frustrated our intention. He was in Eger on his last birthday but one having the keynote address at HUSSE 5 conference, lecturing on Joyce and Cage—literature and music—his beloved world of scholarship. As always, he, with his crystal-clear sound, accurate accent, elaborate presentation, the sound of music of his piano-playing, carried his hearers with him. When I was telling about his commemorative volume, he was happy. But soon bad news became known about his failing health and left us unnoticed. Thus the happy-birthday tribute turned into a memorial tribute.

Péter Egri, professor of English and American literature, head of the English departments at Kossuth Lajos University, Debrecen, and Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, was a nationally and internationally acknowledged expert on British, American and European literature, music, painting, and genre theory. He was a scholar of comparative literary and cultural studies whose major contribution was in the advancement of comparative methodology. His intertextual and cultural readings and writings in the context of European and Anglo-American culture opened up new perspectives. He was a respected representative of Hungarian culture and scholarship abroad, a visiting professor and researcher at the most famous American and English universities, and an inspiring teacher at home under whose supervision many generations of Hungarian scholars in English Studies wrote their MA and PhD theses. As a tutor, colleague, and friend he never forced his opinion on others, but listened attentively, trying to understand, convince, and help.

His outstanding achievements and dedication toward exemplary goals were among the best when he was first awarded the most prestigious honor in English and American studies, the Országgh László Award and other admittedly the highest Hungarian honors in his professional field, the Hungarian Academy's Award and the Szent-Györgyi Albert Prize.

We pay a tribute of our respect and admiration to Péter Egri, a professor, and a scholar who has reached an unsurpassed level of excellence and achievement. A leading spirit who has gone far beyond the standard obligations to become a driving power in shaping our literary scholarship, criticism, and culture.

Colleagues, students, friends, and all those who knew and loved him will remember and miss his teaching, lectures and seminars, his brilliant talent and thorough knowledge, his subtle and elegant use of language, his critical style and sharp logic of argumentation, his sparkling wit and sense of humor, his polite manners and personality.

Lehel Vadon