

CHARLES BUKOWSKI

in search of the hero

I've never met him, even in the alley, I make out
the form that has battered me the ground, but
it's no good, it was nothing but a half-brained
ape.

In print, for a while, it was Hemingway, then I
noticed that his writing was writing itself, he was
not writing it.

In drinking, it was nobody, I opened and closed
the bar, others gave it a try but they came and
left, they had neither the thirst nor the gamble
nor the suicidal bent.

I stayed on that stool for 5 years waiting for a
drinking companion.

hundreds came and left.

they died, quit, vanished.

I ordered more drinks.

then I left to drink in the rooms with the only
companion I had
met.

in sex, I began quite late and being fully rested
I gave it a roaring bang, learning more from each
and applying it in all its fulsome aspects, awakening
in new bed after new bed and back in some old
ones--looking out the window and seeing my car
parked outside--and remembering that there was
another to do that day and maybe another that
night.

dinners, lunches, wines, walks in the park,
walks along the sea, sometimes meeting a brother,
a son, an x-husband and, once, a husband.

I knew of nobody who was doing as many bodies as
I and drinking as hard at the same time.

I was doing it all and I was penniless and stupid
and almost without reason.

to return now and then to my tiny dirty court
after long absences to find wild notes under

(COPY SAME STANZA)

my door and in the mailbox.
I couldn't handle them all and some became
enraged
attacked my automobile, broke into the
premises, destroyed everything, the female
hurricanes from hell.
and to have the phones ringing throughout
all time, curses, wails, hangups, re-rings,
threats of love, threats of death, and if I took
the phone off the hook,--soon the sound of
a racing motor, the screeching of brakes
and a rock through the window.
3 times there were attempted murders
against me.
and I was old and ugly, worse than poor,
often even without toilet paper and I was
only giving the game half a try....
but, I mean, I knew of nobody like me
around.
I was my own hero.
crazed, true.
I remember once after a rock crashed
through my window and I heard the car
roaring off, sex-worn as I was
I decided to jack off just for the stupid
hell of it.
it was terribly hard work but I worked
and worked about 45 minutes, finally
brought it off.
there was hardly enough to wipe
off.
Christ, I thought, I've got to be nuts,
I ought to kill myself.
instead I got up and poured a glass
half of scotch and half of
water.
drank it, of course, you jacksnipe.

what I mean is, I knew nobody like
me.
there was nobody anywhere.
that's all right
but it's all very odd.
I mean, all these faces and bodies
and feet and earlobes,
the history of man and the roach

(CART. SAME STANZA)

and the tambourine,
I'd go white into black bars,
I'd go drunk into Mexican bars,
I'd go anywhere,
I'd spit into the eye of God and
the devil and nothing would
happen.

well, sometimes it would
but I'd wake up somewhere
and the sun would be
shining
and I'd still be there.

I knew nobody on the search,
I knew nobody on the run,
I knew nobody who wanted to
shake up the history of the hours
and make them do
something.

I bought the cheapest junk cars
off the lots
and drove them to Caliente, to
Mexico,
the woman saying,
"Jesus, you're driving this thing
like a Cadillac!"

I felt it was better than a Cadillac
because I was
driving it.

I played my poor dollars at the
track
as if all the gods of eternity were
with me
and besides I had a system
based upon my readings of
3 years worth of chart books of
all the North American
tracks.

I liked those hills behind the
track, so burned-out, so fucked-
over, they felt like
I.

I always wanted to walk out

(CONT. SAME STANZA)

4 - Hope

4 - Bull

there
but only in spirit, my body knew
better--that is, better to die by
my own hand.

I had my favorite place to stay
afterwards, over the border, past
San Clemente, it was an old blue
motel over the ocean and you could
hear the ocean running there
beneath you as you came, drank,
slept or stayed awake thinking of
childhood, death, lack of meaning,
and the 25 percent take the Mexican
tracks put upon my scarce
dollar.

all this means nothing to you, of
course, because you feed off of
me, maybe, because I do the
living and the writing for you, I
get letters from guys in jails and
madhouses and just out there
anywhere who state, basically
the same thing: "you've made it
possible for me to go on..."

great.
but who do I use when I begin
wearing thin?
where do I look?
what do I do?
where are the insanely strong?
where do they hide?
I've been here 70 years.
I don't think that they exist.
either in the Arts, the farts or the
cabin on the hill.
it's all right,
the kindest things I have found
are four
walls.
there's more grace and strength
there than in any
imaginary
heaven.

(CONT. SAME STANZA)

5-Hero

5-Buk

or actual
hell.

so, the stiffness of our agony is
even intolerable to
me.
yes.

so, let me tell you a funny one
to round it out or around and
over. overt. ha,
ha.

remember it quite well,
had been drinking, of course,
some place, somewhere, I
know it ended in some small
room in downtown L.A.
I was there with this beautiful
brown girl with long hair, so
young, such a fine body, so
long long hair, it was almost
too much, and I think it began
in a bar downstairs or around
the corner and it was possibly
arranged that I was to have
sex with this half child of
unbelievable beauty, I
bullshit you not, but there
was also a large heavy
woman there, even much
uglier than I and I turned to her
and said, "you can leave the
room now."

"I stay," she said, "I make sure
you not hurt her."

Christ, she was ugly.
the room whirled, the world
whirled, the cheap flowers upon
the wallpaper bloomed and
blinked at me.
I wanted the obvious to become
the unobvious.
I wanted Christ to do the

(CONT. SAME STANZA)

tango.

I wanted the moths of the
earth, the caterpillars to be
mounted and recognized
as the ultimate
glory.

"I don't want her," I said,
"I want you."

"huh?"

"I'm going to fuck you!"

I rushed at her, grabbing,
while noticing, at the same
time, the beautiful girl on
the bed not moving, not
saying anything.

the big old woman was
stronger than shit,
she fought me off, I was
very drunk, it was some
battle, I reached for where
a breast was supposed to
be, I tried to kiss her
drained and wretched
mouth
but she was full of
refried beans and a
good
old fashioned viciousness,
we banged against the
dresser,
spun around,
she shoved me off,
I crashed against a wall,
she rushed me
and swung a vast arm
upon which was attached
a SILVER HOOK!
no hand, just this gleaming
metallic gripping clipping
snipper thing,
and I think that she was a

(CONT. SAME STANZA)

lesbian also,
and I ducked under the hook
and she swung it again
and I leaped aside,
I ran toward the door, it
was closed,
I ducked under the swing of
the hook once more--
you have no idea how it
glinted, glinted, under that
one cheap light globe that
illuminated that heartless
room in hell--
I landed a right to her
gut--
it only gave her a moments
pause--
I flung open the door and
ran down the stairway
(it was a 2nd. floor)
and she chased me down
that stairway
and I ran down the the street,
I ran and I ran
and then I looked around and
she was gone.
and then, luckily for me,
unlike so many other nights of
nights
elsewhere and everywhere,
I remembered
exactly where I had parked
my car.

I have thousands of stories
but if I haven't bored you
I have bored
myself.

just mainly to say
it's tough crud all around,
but I'll never be
lonely
because there's nothing
to be
around.

(CONT. NEW STANZA)

8 - HERO

8 - BUL

the albatross is a fake,
Van Gogh hustled
dead strokes,
the universe is a shoe
with gum stuck to the
bottom of its
walking,
there are no heroes,
there is only a mouse
in the corner
blinking its eyes,
there is only a corner
with a mouse,
Kant wiping his
ass,
the imbecility of
continuance,
the warp of the
fingernail,
toads embracing slivers
of two bit sunlight,
the monkey fingering
his
butthole,
and you
reading this page
now.

sure,

