

Bukowski and I sometimes have occasion to correspond, usually over someone wanting to get in touch with him, and his letters are always good, so I got the idea of getting him to pour himself a drink and write me a longer letter than usual, sort of a self-interview. I explained to him that I was trying to cook up some things on West Coast writing for you, described Home Planet to him, suggested a few topics to him, but left it open for him to go on about anything that was on his mind. I didn't want to do a formal interview, because I knew it would be distasteful to both of us and anyway there have been a number of such interviews done with him lately, most of them bad in one way or another. So here's the result. I like the way it turned out.

—Gerald Locklin

I like San Pedro. It's a good place to hide, close to Hollywood Park, Los Alamitos. You're not going to find a bevy of poets sipping espresso anywhere along Pacific and/or Gaffey. There are some drawbacks: not a decent eating place in town and the liquor stores often close at 9:30 p.m. But since I buy by the case and have 3 or 4 bottles hidden around, I'm always all right. There's a sense of relaxation and easiness around here that you don't find in too many places. I like it.

The films, yes, mainly the Ferreri (spell?) I'd like to see. Gazzara can act and he's got good eyes. We'll see . . . I've met any number of movie people, mainly through Barbet Shroeder, cameramen, directors, mostly the European crowd, who I think get film down closer where actuality is, except now and then they come on with some so called avant-garde stuff which I remember seeing some 40 years ago in the Art Movies in New York City. . . . On the Godard subtitles: I can't speak French and I was surprised that he gave me credit. What happened is that a Frenchman translated the script into English and then I took the English script and Americanized that. But, on the other hand, Godard used one of my poems for a movie scene and I don't get credit for that, except one night we were drinking and he handed me this batch of francs, so that's cash, not credit, o.k.

There have been some cameras around looking at me and I'm not exactly sure what this had to do with creation, except that they are poking at what is left of the Chinaski soul. It's not good stuff but when I get drunk enough I don't mind. Then I can talk, then I can say things. But too much exposure is death, so I knock off a good 50% of it, and soon may stop it all. Recently turned down \$2,000 to give a poetry reading because my gut is turning from this hanging from a limb and being poked at. You put a piece of paper in the machine and you type something on it. That's the essence; all the other crap is the bleed, and when they bleed you long enough and sit down to that sheet of paper and nothing comes out, the old yea-sayers will be the first to leave. So it's best to leave them first and to get back to the mechanics of doing. Horses, booze and the typer. Anything that gets in the way of that is deathly, including women, and *especially* including women. The longer I manage to stay away from women the better I feel. Last night at the quarter horses I'm on the 2nd deck when I see this redhead with the ass and tits that I used to know, all that red hair in long fire, I see her walking up to a betting window alone. I run downstairs and bet the remainder of the night on the first floor. No more: that sticky web of madness is for the more hardy.

Besides, she was not a nice person.

*Wormie?* Well, to me it's the only lit mag. I mean, when I get a copy I can go right to the crapper and read it while I'm shitting and I can jump



into the tub or into bed and read it. I don't have any trouble with most of the poems and when I'm finished I want more. I can't say that about any other mag. When I read them I get a headache, I get sleepy, I can't turn the pages, I can't believe the stuff they get off with, 19th century posing as the poet, stuff that is so terrible that it's unbelievable, it's like a joke that doesn't work, again and again, and they keep telling it over and over. Malone has the editor's eye, that's all there is to it. . . . The *New York Quarterly* had a great format, and about 40 percent of the poems but they are in the process of folding even though they tell me it's not true. All I know is that it's been a couple of years since they've come out and that they're sitting on 25 or 30 of my accepted poems, but I'll live, I'll write some more.

New York City? I could only last 3 months there. It's a hard place to be without money and when you don't know the territory and you don't have a trade. That was 1944 or 1945, so maybe it's a nice place now, only I'm not going to try it.

Politics? Politics are just like women: get into them seriously and you're going to come out looking like a earthworm stepped on by a long-shoreman's boot.

Well, I've got an American Express card, a Visa and a BMW but I still write, and writing has always been a pleasure to me, a non-work item, it's as easy as drinking so I usually do them both together. I hear from other writers how HARD it is to write and if it were that god damned hard for me I'd try something different. I had my longest writer's block last month --7 days, and most of it was caused by *people* getting in between me and the machine. Martin of Black Sparrow told me, "I've got so many of your poems on backlog that if you died today I could bring out 5 or 6 more books and all of them would be good." Of course, he's a fan. Maybe only 3 of them would be good.

I've turned down several free trips to Italy, France, Spain. That's just more *interviews*, Gerald. I'm about on page 240 on HAM ON RYE (novel) which means it's just about done. Then a bit of re-write and then the 2 year wait for publication. That's all right. It was just 1970 that I quit the post office, and it's been a good fast glorious bang bang bang, and if I die right now I will have known that it was a real good cheap thrill.

There might be some new good writers around. I hope so. But I no longer read books. I read the newspaper, the race results, boxing matches. I've got on tv, pretty bad. I look forward to the Hearn-Leonard fight. Notice I've reversed the order of the names and also look for the fight to end that way. Duran was just a fat man. When Hearn hits Leonard, L. is going to get swatted by a lean thin man with a mule's hoof at the end of his glove. Leonard's got guts though and style. Whoever wins is really going to have to earn it.

rivers of good wine to you,

