

WHAT DO YOU WRITE ON A MACHINE

WHICH TYPES LIKE THIS  
WHILE WHITCH TYPES LIKE THIS  
IN YOUR REPAIR IT REPAIR SHOT SHOP FOR O  
VER A WEEK?

I thought it was bad working on  
in the slaughterhouse slaughter hours  
slaughterhouse slaughterhouse  
after not eating for two days.  
this is bad too but not that bad.  
what would you write on a machine which  
acts like this?

I THINK WHAT MATTERS MOST IS THAT  
WE MUST WE MUST STOP BEING LIM LIMPITED  
LIMITED IN OUR ACTIONS.  
I ATTEMPT TO BEHOLD MYSELF TO MY OWN  
ACTIONS  
AND NOW I AM DRUNK RUNK DRUNK  
battling this miserable machine  
and I think of a few who could pull  
it out working thisly and thusly,  
mainly e.e. cummings, Hrm Hem and  
Edna St. Vincent Millay

YET I SHOULD BE MAD ENOUGH TO LIVE  
THROUGH THIS THIS, for after all, there  
was a period of 4 or 5 years when I  
didn't even have a typewriter and I  
printed everything out in  
long hand, AND THOUGH ITC MAE  
CAME BACK, THE MAIN MATTER WAS THE  
MATTER OF doing, which is mainly what I  
am goind doing tonight?

don't tell me what a p9 poem is. I  
don't know.  
WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT I APPLIED FOR  
A GUGGENHEIM ONCE AND I SHOULD HAVE  
SHOULD HAVE MY  
BRAIN REAMED FOR THAT ONE.

still, you know, the look ad and shape  
and ro form of these these words on this  
paper look f better than any I have  
seen for some time.



ALSO, WITH OUR NEW SCHOOL WE ARE  
GOING TO NEED TO NEED WHAT THE  
OLD SCHOOL NEEDED (speaking speaking  
here from the male viewpoint;  
while listening listening to Shostakovich

WE ARE ALWAYS GOING TO NEED A  
WOMAN TO KEEP US AWAY FROM SELF-  
LOVE

a woman to  
a woman to tell us that  
we don't know how to pull up a  
venetian blind  
properly wash dishes  
dishes dishes

DRIVE AN AUTOMOBILE  
TREAT EACH CAT PROPERLY FROM  
THE OTHER

that we have no powers of  
observation  
that we would drop food upon the  
floor

UNKNOWINGLY  
and fart and snore in our sleep  
sleep.

A MAN CONSTANTLY CRITICIZED UPON  
CRITICIZED UPON TINY TURNS OF  
EXISTENCE BEGINS TO DOUBT HIMSELF  
continually and this is a healthy  
AND GREAT THING.

THIS IS OUR SCHOOL AND THIS IS  
OUR WAY.

note the lovely and lucky gathering  
of these marks upon paper.

IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE ANYBODY ANY  
BODY HAS BROKEN THROUGH TO ANYWHERE.

PICK up these pebbles and  
crash them through the narrowness of our  
universe.

Charles Bukowski

## ME AND MY BUDDY

I can still see us  
together  
back then  
sitting by the river  
while shit-  
faced on the  
grape  
and playing with the  
poem  
knowing it to be  
utterly useless  
but something to  
do  
while  
waiting

as the Emperors  
with their frightened  
clay faces  
watch us as we  
drink

Li Po crumbles his  
poems  
sets them to  
flame  
floats them down the  
river.

"what have you  
done?" I  
ask him.

Li passes the  
bottle: "they are  
going to end  
no matter what  
happens . . . ."

I drink to his  
knowledge  
pass the bottle  
back

sit tightly upon my  
poems  
which I have  
jammed halfway up my  
crotch

I help him burn  
some more of his  
poesy

it floats well  
down  
the river  
lighting up the  
night  
as good words  
should.

Charles Bukowski

# THE EMPTIES

we emptied wine bottles of the worst brands as if they were  
thimbles  
and our 4 a.m. battles had us evicted from apartment after  
apartment all over the city  
and one of our worst problems was the disposal of the  
empties,  
we were afraid the landlord would get the tip-off from the  
trashcans that there were drunks upon his premises  
so we snuck some of the empties into trashcans of other  
apartment houses  
but we still had leftovers  
so we stored them inside our place  
in cartons and bags until we were surrounded by  
these  
until finally  
upon the night of nights  
(and it happened often)  
we'd sneak the bags and boxes  
down the back stairway and  
into the old car  
(luckily, a sedan)  
and we'd get in  
the whole floor in the back  
stacked  
bag and box upon bag and box  
and the whole back seat jammed with  
boxes and sacks of empties  
rising up against the back window  
so visibility was almost  
impossible  
while in the front seat  
between us  
sat boxes and bags of  
empties  
and also upon the floor  
where they often shifted and fell  
getting in the way of the  
clutch, the brake, the gearshift  
while, of course, between us we also had  
a couple of fulls  
at the ready . . .  
such a clinking and clanking of empties  
in the moonlight!

. . . driving slowly up into Baldwin  
Hills  
terrified that the police might stop  
us  
and give us a life sentence  
or at least a couple of years in a  
madhouse,  
we'd make it up there  
along the side roads  
in that old car  
we knew could quit at any  
moment  
we'd cut off the headlights  
and drive in among the silent sucking  
oilwells standing there and working away  
indifferent to us  
we'd get to where the road got  
both rocky and muddy  
and I'd say,  
"THIS IS IT!"  
then  
as if the very searchlights of  
hell were upon me  
I'd leap out and begin throwing  
sacks and boxes of empties into the  
pumping dark moonlight,  
hearing tumbles and crashes  
the familiar sound of breaking glass as  
per our 4 a.m. battles  
I'd grab for more and more,  
sweating, dizzy and sick  
I'd hurl the empties into the  
night  
until the entire car was  
cleaned out.  
then  
she would look at the mounds of  
glass and say,  
"Jesus Christ, did we we drink all  
that?"  
I'd survey the mass and the thought of  
that would always make me  
vomit  
then she'd open the door and vomit  
out the side  
then

I'd get in  
take a new hit  
start the car and  
we'd roll out of the hills  
in an attempt to find our way back to  
the Westlake district,  
it took some gas, more than we could  
afford

but it felt very good to get rid of  
all those empties  
I'd cut the engine  
to save on fuel  
and we'd glide down out of the  
hills  
being passed by the proper  
people  
she'd hand me another  
hit  
and I'd pass it back  
then  
she'd say,  
"Geez, don't you feel  
better?"  
and I'd answer, "yeah, how much  
we got left?"  
she'd hold up the  
bottle: "enough to get us  
in."

it was a victory that  
only those in the know could  
appreciate.  
"I think we got 3 bottles at the  
apartment," I'd say.  
"maybe 4, maybe 5," she'd  
say,  
and we'd head back toward our  
place,  
a place we hoped would be ours  
for a while . . .  
we'd done what we could to appear to be  
decent citizens  
although we knew that our time was  
limited--  
in all manners and ways

we tried to keep it going  
even though we knew they would never  
understand, nor did we ever  
expect them  
to.

Charles Bukowski

## DO YOU THINK HEMINGWAY OR CELINE WOULD ACT LIKE THIS?

"Yes, Chinaski, we are one of your main publishers over here, I am phoning  
from \_\_\_\_\_."

"yes?"

"I phoned you once before, remember?"

"no."

"it was about a title for one of your books. the english title would not  
translate well and you were very helpful, you gave us another title."

"uh."

"well, there's a book fair in Los Angeles and my publisher is coming with  
me, I'm the editor and we'd like to visit you."

"I don't have visitors."

"you don't have visitors?"

"no."

"well, we are coming to the book fair and we thought we'd drop by."

"listen, I'm not a snob, and I'm not playing genius, I just don't like to sit around and talk-- talking has nothing to do with writing, only writing has to do with writing."

"but you must talk to people sometime . . ."

"not that way."

"well, you could listen to us talk . . ."

"you can do that without me around."

"well, we could just drink then."

"I hear that plenty."

"we will come any how."

"no, I am honored that you publish me but that's it. I type words on a sheet of paper and then that's over and I type more words on a sheet of paper, and that's all there is, don't you understand?"

"we would come by, we would not stay long."

"it's best my way, that you won't stay at all."

"we will phone you when we arrive in town."

"don't phone."

"you don't understand, we adore you, we revere you, we love you."

"if you love me, leave me alone."

"my publisher was sure he could meet you . . ."

"listen, when you phoned I had a bottle in my hand and I was going upstairs to type and now I am going to go ahead and do that . . ."

"do you think Hemingway or Celine would act like this?"

"I don't know. they're dead, I have work to do."

I hung up.

I took the bottle and walked up the stairway and I didn't feel like a son of a bitch at all--or a genius or a snob, although I might have been all three.

anyhow, I got the cork out, poured a goblet of the good red, slipped a piece of paper into the machine, lit one of my mangalore ganesh beedies, turned the radio on to KPFK, took a hit of the red, and this is what I typed on the first page after answering the telephone, and it may not be immortal but it sure beats chattering about it or anything related to it, those bodies in their chairs, trying to think of things to say--this beats that any day, and now I'm going to put in another sheet of paper and do it all over again.

Charles Bukowski

# THE PRIVATIZATION OF THE PARTS

You're not going to like this one  
but I'm going to write it  
anyhow.

writing a screenplay that is  
made into a movie is not  
good.

movies get tenthousandfold  
more attention  
than they  
should.

it brought me a minor  
fame.

at first when I was approached  
in public places  
I would answer questions  
quietly  
then walk  
off.

but I found out that this  
disturbed my motherfucking  
thought process.

what they had done was  
to give me a name and  
a place, a  
position.

I didn't want to think  
of myself as anything more than  
a body moving about or  
not.

so it has happened at  
racetracks, gas stations and  
other public places of  
late

I have been approached  
and it always seems like  
the same voice:

"excuse me, but are  
you . . ."

"no," I will say, "I am  
not," and I will move  
off.

it is only an attempt  
at the privatization of my  
parts.

thank god I am not truly  
famous and thank god  
that you are  
not either.

Charles Bukowski

# THE PROCLAIMERS

it could be a curious time in our culture  
but more and more I meet people who tell me,  
'I am a writer," or "I am a painter," or "I am an  
actor."

there are more writers, painters, actors  
now than there have ever been.

if only there were more and better  
writings, paintings and  
performances.

I have been writing for 55 years  
but I don't tell people,  
"I am a writer."

what I do know is that  
most of the time  
I am not

even as I am typing this  
and  
especially  
now.

Charles Bukowski

## A SUMMING UP

sick for two days  
after a 4 a.m. drinking bout  
of countless bottles  
consumed

many men your age are already  
dead  
or if not dead  
then  
witless and  
wasted

you know that  
the booze will  
escape you  
right to your grave  
and your typer will rattle  
no more

which would hardly be a  
world wide  
catastrophe

but there's so little  
going on  
on the poetry front  
that  
it would seem a heinous  
act to  
cash-out  
and leave the game  
totally to  
the  
suckbutts

so next time  
you drink  
hold it to  
one or two bottles  
and retire at  
2 a.m.  
as you used to  
do  
as a young  
man

there's need for  
more  
rattling of the  
typer

for words that  
smoke  
their bellies full of  
fire

laughing at the heedless  
happenstance.

Charles Bukowski



# THE APPARITIONS

I thought I saw the one with the long hair  
standing by the coffee stand.  
she had on dark shades.  
I ducked and got on the escalator  
and went down to the first  
floor and mingled with the  
crowd.

a few days later  
I thought I saw the redhead.  
it looked like her ass from behind  
and when her head turned  
it looked like the same  
face.

I changed floors again,  
went all the way over to the  
clubhouse.

it might all be my imagination  
that I am seeing 2 of these women  
that I once thought I couldn't  
live  
without.

but  
at least  
I'm not seeing  
the other  
5.

Charles Bukowski