

NY 9 #55

The gym co@ch

he just didn't like me @nd I didn't much like him.

this one afternoon he put me on the volleyb@ll team.

volleyb@ll, th@t's for girls.

"I don't w@nt to pl@y this game," I s@ld.

"you'll pl@y," s@ld the coach.

the first ball c@me over the net

@nd I didn't lift my h@nds.

the b@ll hit me in the f@ce.

"you'll pl@y," s@ld the co@ch.

"fuck you," I told him.

they hit the next b@ll to somebody else on my te@m.

he ignored it.

"@ll right," the co@ch s@ld, "we're going to pl@y this g@me!

@nd e@ch member of the losing te@m h@s to do 21 pushups!

@nd I'm on THIS te@m!"

then he stepped b@ck of the net, f@cing me.

he sl@mmmed the b@ll str@ight @t me.

I sl@mmmed it b@ck.

the g@me w@s on.

well, we were just too good for them.

it soon bec@me @pp@rent th@t they were going to lose.

the co@ch didn't w@nt to do those

21 pushups.

so, right before the end of the game
he said, "All right, I'm calling this
thing!"

"fuck you," I told him.

he came charging at me.

he was a big guy, I didn't know what
to do.

As he came toward me, I ducked down
and he went over my right shoulder and
as he did I gave him a little
shove.

he slammed right into the edge of the
groundstand.

he was out cold.

our team left him there and we went
into the shower room.

I'm standing under the shower when
the coach walks in.

"I don't know your problem," he said
to me, "but I'm man enough to accept
your apology."

"fuck you," I told him.

he came charging at me.

there was this little rubber mat on the
floor, it was wet with soap.

I slid it to where I thought he would be
coming.

he stepped right on it and went down
hard.

it hurt his back real bad, he couldn't
get up.

"oh, my god," he said, "oh, my god!"
I toweled off and walked to the locker
room.

I got suspended for a week.

when I came back he put me on the
baseball team and I homered my
first time at bat.

Charles Bukowski

Lucinda

**Lucinda was always sitting on the bed,
pulling her stockings on or off
(she didn't wear panty hose)
or sitting in front of the mirror
applying her makeup or combing her
hair,
although she didn't always use the
mirror for her hair—
she sometimes sat on the potty and
did it
or on the edge of the bed.**

**Lucinda liked to talk while she was
combing her hair:**

**"I was over at this guy's place and
he slapped me across the face, hard;
it felt pretty good . . ."**

**"I fucked your friend Jack, he wasn't
so hot . . ."**

**"you know Sherry? well, I fucked her
dad once, pretty interesting old guy,
he used to steal her relief checks
and buy booze with them . . ."**

**"I fucked the pizza man when he came
by, he begged for it . . . I wouldn't
have let him only I was high on the
pills . . ."**

but Lucinda was at my place, most of the time, pulling her stockings on and off, applying makeup, combing her hair and talking.

one time we were on a 3 day and night drunk and on the 3rd night Lucinda said, "let's drive to Vegas and get married!"

"what?" I asked.

"let's drive to Vegas and get married, let's do it now before we change our minds!"

I began mulling it.

"If we get married you can have it any time you want it."

"no," I told her, "I don't want to get married."

It wasn't long after that Lucinda started hanging with a little guy with a small black mustache. Mickey.

but
Lucinda still came around.

"Mickey and I are going to get married, we set the date . . . met his parents, they said to him, 'how'd you ever manage to meet a nice girl like this?' and you know what Mickey said?"

"no."

"he said, 'what the hell was wrong with my other girls?' ha, ha, ha!"

Lucinda showed me some photos of Mickey, of her and Mickey, they were down at the park by the lake.

I looked at the photos.

**"looks like a nice guy . . ."
I wished her well . . .**

it was around noon one day and the phone rang and I got out of bed and answered it.

**it was
Lucinda.**

"hi! listen, I have to see you!"

"huh?"

"yeah, I have to see you about something . . ."

she gave me a street address.

"give me ten minutes," I said. . . .

It was an upstairs apartment. I rang the buzzer and Lucinda's voice came down through the speaker.

"is it you?"

"Marlon Brando . . ."

there was another buzz and the door swung open.

I went up the stairway, she was waiting in the doorway, apartment 3.

“come in . . .”

**It was Mickey's apartment.
on the walls were these glass frames all around with little sayings inside of them like:
SEE YOU IN ARGENTINA WITH MY OKARINAI
etc.**

“I'll be right out . . .”

Lucinda walked into the bathroom and started combing her hair.

“see that board with the nails sticking through it on the table near the door?”

**I walked over.
Jesus.
It was a board with 15 or 20 nails driven through one side and sticking out the other.
very large, sharp nails.**

“see it?”

“yeah.”

“Mickey made that, he's afraid of you.”

**I sat on the couch and waited.
Lucinda kept talking from the bathroom.
I went to the refrigerator and**

got a beer.

Lucinda finally came
out.

“let’s go.”

“where?”

“your place.”

“I don’t want to get in the way of
anything.”

“what thing?”

“you and Mickey . . .”

“Mickey? fuck that son of a
bitch!”

“I don’t want to get in the
way . . .”

“I’ll give you a blowjob.”

“all right.”

we walked to the door, Lucinda
locked it
and then we went down the stairway
together.

Charles Bukowski

writers

most writers have more
wives
than men in other
occupations
except for the
actor
who has access
to hordes of
ladies.

the writer is more
divergent: in times
of turmoil, family or
otherwise,
he goes to that
special
mistress:
his
typewriter.

the writer has learned
painfully
that one woman
is not a cure
for another.

the wife knows that
she can't ever
compete
with the typewriter
because that

very fine
machine
has saved
the writer's
ass
for, lo, and
many a
year.

the writer knows
that a quick night
in bed
with a dolly
doesn't even help
the
ego.

the typewriter
not only helps the
ego—but
right
or
wrong
or
otherwise
it is
the
ego.

most women
simply
can't
continue to
live with men
who are
swallowed up
by their
machines.

and
then
writers look up

from the page
and notice
a
new wife,
there,
like
that.

the new wife,
at first,
finds the
typewriter
interesting,
finds the
writer
a
somewhat
unusual
creature
but
as time
unfolds
she begins to
realize
that the writer
is
the typewriter.

when the writer is
not at his
machine
he is not
very much.
he only seems to
be
in a waiting
process
and while
waiting
he seems
not very good
at anything

else.

he seems
disinterested
awkward,
imbecilic.

a writer is not
much
away from his
machine
and
there are times
when
he is not much
with it
either.

most writers have more
wives
than men in other
occupations
except for the
actor
who speaks
other men's lines
instead of his
own
and who
therefore
doesn't count
anyhow.

Charles Bukowski

FAME

I turn on the landing lights and head for the
runway where the crowd awaits
me.

what a fucking farce.

but got to play it out.

step onto it.

there you are.

mike in face, cameras on.

you answer questions.

on the run.

really can't be bothered, you know.

you shove through.

they make you feel important.

jesus, don't they have anything else to do?

a young girl screams your name.

you give her the finger.

there, that'll hold her.

where was that whore when you were
living on boiled weenies?

I finally fight my way to the limo.

couple of babes in there.

well, what the hell.

somebody else in there.

forget his name.

he hands me a drink.

now, that's better.
I tell the driver, "get us the fuck out
of here!"
we move out.

the guy who handed me the drink
says, "got you booked on national
tv tomorrow night."
I drain my drink.
'fuck that, I'm not going!"
'but it's national tv, they love you!"
'fuck 'em! fix me another drink!:

we are on the freeway then,
going somewhere.
my place, a hotel, I don't know.
one of the babes asks me a
stupid question.
I don't even answer.

everybody's stupid, it's a stupid
universe.
I'm all alone.
I get the drink, slam it down.

"park the car!" I yell at the
chauffeur, "I want to drive!"

'but, sir, we're on the freeway!"

'park the fucking car!
I want to drive!"

nobody says anything.
the babes or the guy talking about
national tv.
the chauffeur works his way toward
a shoulder, parks it, gets out,
opens the door.
I climb out.
"you," I tell him, "sit between the
whores!"

he does as I say.

I get into front, put it in drive and
slide into traffic.

It's been a long month.

I open the limo up, a real power, it's
like nuke-powered.

"somebody fix me another
drink!" I yell back.

It's been a long month, a long
one.

I've got to
unwind.

nobody knows what it's like to
be alone.

Charles Bukowski

working out—again

I've only got one way to go
and It's
either write or go mad.
well, that's two ways, Isn't
it?

I think that
the company I would find
in the madhouses
would be no better
than the company I found
in the factories
so
I linger around this
machine
and
work out
often in rather careless
abandon
but It keeps me flexible and
fairly sane
and
now and then
a good poem
or
a good story
will
arrive.

I even get some letters
telling me that
my writing has
saved
some people's lives
but the only life
I really write to save
is
my own—yet
some of the letters
hardly make me feel
unworthy of my
trade, especially those
from the prisons
some as far away as
New Zealand
and also those letters from
the madhouses
I am attempting to
stay out of.

and
one of the nicest letters
I ever received was
from a lady who worked
in a Las Vegas whorehouse
who said
she liked my stuff
and so did
many of the girls
and
if I ever came up
there
I could have all of it
I wanted
for
free (writing has its
rewards, as they
say).

but
essentially
each night
around here is
a
new night
and
it's up to
the typewriter
and the
gods
although
I would certainly not
be fool enough
to
test this machine
each night.

yet the night I die
(don't let me go
In the morning . . . please,
I don't like
mornings)
I hope that I am
as close to this
lucky
mechanism as
possible (that's what this
machine types
tonight) It's a
love affair . . . bravo, bravo!!
such a plunge into the stuff of
miracle. . . .

Charles Bukowski

hunk of rock

**Nina was the hardest of them
all,
the worst woman I had known
up to that moment
and I was sitting in front of
my second hand black and white
tv
watching the news
when I heard a suspicious
sound in the kitchen
and I ran out there
and saw her with
a full bottle of whiskey
a 5th
and she had it and
was headed for the back porch
door**

but I caught her and
grabbed at the bottle
“give me that bottle, you
fucking whore!”
and we wrestled for the
bottle
and let me tell you
she gave me a good fight
but
I got it away from her
and I told her to
get her ass out of there.
she lived in the place
in the back
upstairs.

I locked the door
took the bottle and a
glass
went out to the couch
sat down and
opened the bottle and
poured myself a good
one.

I shut off the tv and
sat there
thinking about what a
hard number
Nina was.
I came up with
at least
a dozen lousy things
she had done
to me.
what a whore.
what a hunk of rock.

I sat there drinking
the whiskey
and wondering

**what I was doing
with Nina.**

**then there was a
knock on the
door.
it was Nina's friend,
Helga.**

**"where's Nina?"
she asked.**

**"she tried to steal
my whiskey, I
ran her ass
out of here."**

**"she said to meet
her here."**

"what for?"

**"she said me and her
were going to do it
in front of you
for \$50.**

"\$25."

"she said \$50."

**"well, she's not
here . . . want a
drink?"**

"sure . . . "

**I got Helga a glass
poured her a
whiskey.
she took a
hit.**

“maybe,” she said,
“I ought to go get
Nina.”

“I don’t want to see
her.”

“why not?”

“she’s a whore.”

Helga finished her
drink and I poured
her another.
she took a
hit.

“Benny calls me a
whore, I’m no
whore.”

Benny was the guy
she shacked
with.

“I know you’re no
whore, Helga.”

“thanks. ain’t ya got no
music?”

“just the radio . . . ”

she saw it
got up
turned it
on.
some loud music came
blaring out.

Helga began to
dance

holding her whiskey
glass in one
hand.

she wasn't a good
dancer
she looked
ridiculous.

she stopped
drained her drink
rolled her glass along the
rug
then ran toward
me
dropped to her knees
unzipped me
and then
she was down
there
doing tricks.

I drained my
drink
poured another.

she was
good.
she had a college
degree
some place back
East.

"get it, Helga, get
it!"

there was a loud
knock
on the front
door.

"HANK, IS HELGA
THERE?"

"WHO?"

"HELGA!"

"JUST A MINUTE!"

**"THIS IS NINA, I WAS
SUPPOSED TO MEET
HELGA THERE, WE HAVE A
LITTLE SURPRISE FOR
YOU!"**

**"YOU TRIED TO STEAL
MY WHISKEY, YOU
WHORE!"**

**"HANK, LET ME
IN!"**

**"get it, Helga, get
it!"**

"HANK!"

**"Helga, you fucking whore . . .
Helga! Helga! Helga!!"**

**I pulled away and
got up.**

"let her in."

**I went to the
bathroom.**

**when I came out they
were both sitting there
drinking and smoking
laughing about
something.
then they**

saw me.

“50 bucks,” said Nina.

“25 bucks,” I said.

**“we won’t do it
then.”**

“don’t then.”

**Nina inhaled
exhaled.**

**“all right, you
cheap bastard, 25
bucks!”**

**Nina stood up and
began taking her clothes off.**

**she was the hardest
of them
all.**

**Helga stood up and
began taking her
clothes off.**

I poured a drink.

**“sometimes I wonder
what the hell is
going on
around here,” I
said.**

**“don’t worry about
it, Daddy, just
get with it!”
“just what am I
supposed to
do?”**

**"just do
whatever the fuck
you feel
like doing,"
said Nina
her big ass
blazing
in the
lamplight.**

Charles Bukowski