

dumb night

"listen," I said, "I had to fight that drunken Indian to get you up here and now look at you—sitting there slobbering all over yourself!"

"you're a fag!" she said.

"what?"

"you're a fag!" she said again.

"no, I don't think I am," I told her.

"you're listening to that symphony music!" she said,

"fuck you, you're a fag!"

"baby, did you see the way I took that Indian out?

left hook to the ribs!

bet you never saw a shot like that!"

"fuck you!" she said.

she was dressed in a tight red dress and her body was fighting to get out of it.

"well, fuck me then," I said.

"you hurt that nice Indian man," she cried, "why does everybody mistreat the American Indian, I think I'm gonna cry!"

"it's just not the American Indian gets mistreated, baby, it's anybody without money or position."

"you didn't have to HURT him!"

"he swung first!"

"you didn't have to hit him back!"

"no? what was I supposed to do, baby?"

"turn the other cheek!"

"shit, he woulda loved that!"

"he was being nice to me!"

"he had his hand up your ass, you screamed for help, remember?"

"fuck you!" she said, "pour me another drink!"

"there's a bottle right there, pour your own."

she picked up the fifth of whiskey, aimed it at her glass, got some of it in there but a vast amount of it sloshed over the coffee table.

I leaped up.

"YOU GOD DAMNED WHORE, YOU'RE WASTING THE BLOOD OF MY LIFE!"

I grabbed the bottle out of her hand.

I pulled it over toward myself.

I began wishing the Indian had won the fight.

still, I hadn't seen a body like that in 4 or 5 years.

she drained her drink, then threw her glass against the wall, looked at me, said, "fuck you!"

I poured myself a shot, drained it, looked at her.

"look, let me call you a cab."

"to where?"

"to your place, to anywhere, baby."

"no, those cab drivers all try to fuck me!"

"tell you what, baby, I'll go with you in the cab, see that you get into your place unharmed, then I'll take the cab back here, how's that?"

her face twisted into this snarling thing:

"WHAT'S THE MATTER, YOU AFRAID OF ME?"

"yes, I'm afraid of you and I'm sorry now that I hit the Indian."

"you sorry you hit the Indian?"

"sure."

"you mean it?"

"yep."

"oh, I think I'm going to cry, you're such a nice man!"

her face contorted and she came over to the couch next to me.

she unzipped me.

"it's all right, baby, forget it."

"NO!"

she began working, she wasn't very good but I thought of her trying to burst out of that red dress and how stupid everything was and I took a mass of her hair and held it up in the air and looked at it and then it got to feeling better, best, good...

then she lifted her head.

"HEY!" I said, "WHAT...?"

"I'm sorry, but I got to thinking about my baby boy..."

"your baby boy?"

"Billy..."

"so you got this baby..."

"Billy's 22..."

"22?"

"yeah and I ain't heard from him in months, he hasn't written!"
"does he know where you live?"
"no, my baby don't know where I live."
"then how can he write you?"
"I dunno."
"Christ!"

I grabbed the bottle, took it to a chair across the room and poured a tall one, drained about half of that.

she got up and sat on the couch.

she just looked at me and teetered back and forth.

"fuck you!" she said.

I wondered how many other guys had ended up like this with this one.

"look," I said, "lets make a deal: I'll give you 50 bucks to take a cab the fuck out of here!"

"o.k.," she smiled, "let me see it!"

I reached into my wallet and plucked out the 50, I held it up. she got up from the couch, she walked toward me.

"I wanna see it!"

"well, look at it!" I waved it in the air.

she grabbed it, turned and ran across the room.

"YOU FUCKING WHORE!" I screamed.

I ran her into a corner, she backed into a corner and then she stuck the 50 into her mouth!

"SHIT!" I screamed.

I tackled her and brought her to the floor, pinned her arms.

"SPIT THAT SON OF A BITCH OUT!" I yelled.

she nodded her head back and forth, no, no, no.

I let one of her arms go, reached for her mouth, she had it pried madly shut, I couldn't open it.

she raked me across the face with the claws from her loose hand. almost at once I could feel my blood dripping.

"I'LL KILL YOU!" I screamed.

I let go of her other arm, put both of my hands around her throat and squeezed.

her mouth opened.

I saw the 50 in there.

I reached into that slime and pulled it out.

I took it back to my chair, sat down and rubbed it against the rug to dry it.

she just stayed down on the floor.

then she said, "well, aren't you going to fuck me?"

"no, thanks," I told her.

"you're a fag!"

"o.k., o.k., I'm a fag."

I poured a drink and drained it off and never had a drink tasted so good.

she was still on the floor.

"if you don't fuck me, I'm going to start screaming so loud that they'll hear me all over this city!"

"wait a minute, baby, let's talk this over..."

"I MEAN IT! I MEAN IT! FUCK ME OR I'LL SCREAM SO LOUD THE WORLD WILL HEAR!"

"baby, if you don't scream I'll give you the 50."

"you mean it?"

"truly."

"o.k., help me up, get me to the couch, pour me a drink and give me the 50."

I did as instructed.

the 50 went into her brassiere, she stuck a cigarette into her mouth and I lit it.

then she said, "you didn't really mean to hit that Indian, did you?"

"of course not."

"then what happened?"

"I just swung to scare him off and I thought he was going to move to the left but he moved to the right and my punch accidentally cracked one of his ribs but I only wanted to scare him off because he had his hand up your ass and you were screaming."

"oh well, then, that's not so bad."

"uh uh..."

"this bottle's about empty, you got another one?"

"of course."

then she sat a while, smoking, and I think she was thinking about something.

"you're not a bad guy, are you?"

"I don't think so..."

"in fact, I think you're a nice guy..."

"thanks..."

she smashed her cigarette out in the tray, unzipped me and started up.

"look," I said, "it's all right, this isn't needed..."

she was at it.

I concentrated on that marvelous body again, I grabbed a mass of her hair and lifted it high...

then she pulled back...

"what the hell?" I asked.

"my baby," she said, "I'm thinking of my baby..."

"god damn you," I said, "screw your baby in the ass!"

then she started screaming, you could hear her all over the city, all over the world.

I just sat there and let her scream.

the bottle was empty.

I went into the kitchen and got the other, opened it, poured a good drink, got that down, poured another and walked it out there and I sat down next to her, had half of that drink, sat it down, lit a cigarette and then just sat there as she screamed and screamed, I no longer gave a damn what happened.

Charles Bukowski

the good life

Luther always knew how to get the women, they were always around and maybe a bit on the prostitute side but the best of those, you know, they really looked good, and on top of all that Luther was a kind of ladies' man. anyhow, to get on with it, we drank a lot in those days and I kind of traveled with Luther and there were some good times and some bad times, but anyhow this one night we had been out all night and we checked into this hotel, it was a cold night, a wet wind blowing, we had lots of laughs in this fancy bar and Luther had two of them with him, real lookers, furs and fancy jewelry, deep dark eyes and bodies molded way beyond belief and everytime Luthur told a joke the girls laughed like mad, their large breasts almost jumping from their tight dresses, then I'd tell one and he girls would just sit and stare coldly.

"he's a good boy," Luther told them, "but he went to grammar school through the front door and stayed so long that they made him the janitor."

the girls laughed and laughed at that one. "oh, Luther," they said, "you're so funny!"

anyhow, after that fancy bar we checked into this hotel, me in one room and directly below me in his large suite was Luther and the two ladies and Luther was a good guy, he

paid for my room and a bottle, so I really couldn't bitch and I got undressed, sat there in just my shorts, I sat there and sucked on the bottle of Jim Beam and the more I drank the more lonely and strange I began to feel and I knew that if I knocked on Luther's door he would never let me in, so I went to my windows, found they opened outward and I stepped out onto a little porch, then I looked down and saw that there was a ledge about 3 or 4 feet wide just outside of Luther's suite and it was about an 18 foot drop down to there and I was 9 stories up. if I missed I was dead but I took another hit of Jim Beam, then I swung over the railing and let myself down and then I was hanging by my hands from this little crevice, my body dangling in the night, and I thought, shit, and I let go and I dropped down on the ledge and for a moment I tilted backwards but I grabbed at some device and held myself there, 8 floors up, traffic and hardness below me, I fought against the death wish, then I began knocking against the glass panes of Luther's suite.

"LUTHER! LUTHER, LET ME IN!"

I could see them in bed there, they were out cold as the wet wind whipped against my ass, my shorts got half-soaked, my feet began to freeze, I beat again and again against the glass panes.

"LUTHER! LUTHER, PLEASE LET ME IN!"

there was no response, they were on the booze and heavy pills, out forever and I slid along the ledge, then I got lucky, I felt a glass pane and it slid a bit, it was open, and I shoved it all the way open and dropped into the room and first thing, walked over and took a hit from a bottle, looked at Luther and the two lovely girls in bed there and I decided to get into bed with them to help my loneliness and started playing with the one nearest me and Luther must have really heated her up because I slid right in and began working away and I just got going good when she half-awakened and said,

"WHO THE HELL ARE YOU!"

and I said, "woops! wrong woman!"
and then before she could quite grasp anything I worked it real fast, zip, zip, zip,
and I came, jumped out of bed, ran for the door, slid the chains off, got out of there,
ran down the hall in my wet come-stained shorts,
found a stairway, ran up, ran down the hall,
got to my door, pulled at it and it was locked,
I couldn't get in, there's a hell of a fix for
you: a man in his wet come-stained shorts
locked out of his room on the 9th floor at
3:30 a.m. but I'll tell you that story at some
other time.

Charles Bukowski

DISGUSTING

I've got this large plastic floater with headrest
and I get onto it
and float about the pool
looking up at the tall majesty of the trees
and the unclear California air
and paddle about for different positions
and different views,
some of my cats
sitting at the edge of the pool,
stare,
thinking that I have gone
crazy.
maybe I have.
they are used to seeing me
drunk,
they never mind
that.
but this?
have I turned into a
fish?
or what?

I flip off my floating bed,
sink down into the blue
pool,
rise up,
swim to the
edge.

I climb out,
walk toward my
towel.
dinner soon
and the boxing matches on
tv,
later a bottle of
cabernet.

it's so nice to
go to
hell.

Charles Bukowski

well, yes, this is a bitter poem

are so many of the people that I know
about the
same?

I would have to judge that they
are.

like sometimes they are in
trouble
and
sometimes
I help them
out

and usually
what I do
saves them
(at least, for a
time)
from whatever crisis
they were
in

so then I
forget about
that
and
go about
other
things

but they
remember
and reward
me

usually with a
book-length
manuscript--

a novel or a mass of
poesy

informing me
that
they have
submitted
same
to my
editor-
publisher

then they sit back
and
wait

leaving the guilt on
my side.

Charles Bukowski