

THE BODY IN THE SQUARE

say, what's this?

I touched
it.

it was once a bright blue vanilla
lass, graze-point StroebeL.

what happened?

hung upsidedown in center of the
town

raped?

no, just burned to
death.

she did what?

tended geese, sang dull songs, slept under
dead moon.

what else?

that's it. only she didn't sleep with the
generals.

look, those black castanets of ankles;
burstcd eyeballs

moaning.

she told the soldiers, 'hell, hurl your
bayonets into the sea

so swordfish can be made of sharks,
and men of lead and history and
mutton'.

enemy propaganda.

of course.

we walked over and sat on a bench. the
trucks climbed over the hill and came down to
us, truck after truck after truck, their
tires shuffling the fat yellow
dust. inside rode wounded half-men
and as they passed the mimicry of bone and
woman, one of them said, 'she might have
loved us if we had been real
enough.' 'sure,' the others said,
'sure.'

but that's how it is when you lose a
war.

when I was a boy we never
dealt with such introspective
foolishness.

Charles Bukowski