

they return to their
former
divertissements.

THE FOOL DINES OUT (1990)

I am with others, including my wife, it is a dark and overexpensive place, we order wine right off, high-priced stuff, the waiter brings it, applies corkscrew, pulls, and the prong rips right out of the cork leaving said cork within the bottle, so he reinserts the corkscrew, tugs, and here it happens again — corkscrew in the air, cork in the bottle.

"having a little trouble, eh? " I ask him.

my wife digs an elbow to my ribs, the waiter goes off for another bottle, returns, digs the corkscrew in again — same thing: out comes the corkscrew without the cork.

"you need another opener," I suggest.

I get another dig in the ribs, the waiter glowers at me, he's totally enraged, gives it another try, same result.

"wow!" I say.

the others at the table look at me as if I had just been convicted of child-rape and now everybody is enraged except me as the waiter goes for a third bottle, returns, and as he inserts the corkscrew he fixes his eyes upon me, he is in total fury and I silently (of course) wish him luck and this time he makes it.

I am the wine-taster, he pours me a bit, I give it a sip, wait a moment, nod to him that the wine is all right.

the remainder of our stay there the other people talk around me as if I am non-existent but upon hearing the conversation I am most happy that I am excluded.

upon leaving I pay the bill, tip 20%, and we walk toward the parking lot, they feeling that they have acted properly in a civilization of overexpensive restaurants, they even say goodnight to me as the valets rush for our overexpensive cars I

wonder what the waiter will do with those two bottles with the ruined corks, I always dug the corks out, drank the wine, cork and all, and I figure that the waiter will do the same, especially if he is tabbed for the loss.

meanwhile my wife is waiting to tell me, when we get into the car alone, that I had treated the waiter quite horribly, didn't I know how to act in public?

and I won't answer.

— Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA

LITERARY NOTES::

Andy Jenkins' i check the mail only when certain it has arrived: letters from people i didn't know, 1986-1994, \$8.95 fm. Bend Press, P.O. Box 886, San Pedro CA 90733. ¶ Rod Anstee's A Review of Jack Kerouac/Selected Letters: 1940-1956, \$3 fm. Water Row Press, P.O. Box 438, Sudbury MA 01776. ¶ Looking for manuscripts that have been rejected by all other editors! smellfeast, edit. by Mark Begley & Staven Bruce, \$3/copy fm. 2644 N. Maroa (#B), Fresno CA 93704.

MODERN CLASSICS::

Joan Jobe Smith's trying on their souls for size, \$5 fm. Smith/Doorstop Books, the Poetry Business, the Studio, Byram Arcade, Westgate, Huddersfield HD1 1ND ENGLAND. ¶ Thomas Wiloch's Decoded Factories of the Heart, unpriced fm. Runaway Spoon Press, P.O. Box 3621, Port Charlotte FL 33949.

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Last Call: A Legacy of Madness (tribute to Bukowski); poetry & prose by Gerald Locklin, Raindog, Jay Alamares, Tracey Young-Cleantis & T. Thrasher, unpriced ltd. edit. fm. Vinegar Hill Books, 381 W. 6th St., San Pedro CA 90731. ¶ Scott C. Holstad's Binge, \$2 fm. Undulating Bedsheets Productions, P.O. Box 25760, Los Angeles CA 90025. ¶ Kevin Bowen's Playing Basketball With The Viet Cong, \$10.95 fm. Curbstone Press, 321 Jackson St., Willimantic CT 06226; also Michael H. Cooper's Dues \$11.95. ¶ Dan Nielsen's My Mind Rolls On Like A Deodorant, \$2 fm. BGS Press, 1240 William St., Racine WI 53402. ¶ Continued in WR: 140