

Poem to Bukowski

I can't write about rats and cock-
roaches friend cause we exterminated
them and the only ones I see around here
are two-legged ones with no tails.
Booze gives me arthritis and my money goes to
the dentist car insurance groceries plumber
doctor taxes phone gas water lights so there's
not much left for playing the horses
and as for whores who steal your manuscripts
that's one problem I don't have.

My life laughs sometimes too
and I guess that's bad for a poet
but maybe it's only because I'm irish
and the fairies tickle my ribs. Maybe
your trouble is being a pole since being married
to one I know how hard it is
for them to laugh unless they're boozed and then it's hard
to tell the laughing from the crying
and you keep hoping they'll go to sleep
because your irish tells you
the sun will be shining when they wake up
and you'd rather hear them snoring
than cry-laughing because you know
they are hurting
and you can't help.

But look at me.
I started out to write a poem to you
and wrote about me instead.
What I want to know is how come
an irish Clairol redhead female with four kids
a beautiful blond husband
and a polish grandfather
likes your old man dead in a room poems?
If you think I'm going to wear
black to your funeral
you're crazy.
I'm going to wear the rainbow color
of your poems.
Only don't die yet friend.
Don't die yet.

-- Claudia Winski

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