

PEOPLE SAY BUKOWSKI HAS SOLD OUT

people say bukowski has sold out
because he tends the garden
of his large old house
above san pedro, the last old ethnic town
on the coast, where beacon street was once
"the toughest street in any port"
and that included singapore.

and people say bukowski has sold out
because he drives a b.m.w.,
one of the best automotive investments,
to the race track and to seal beach,
where he can get for fifteen bucks
all the crablegs he can eat
at the historic roadhouse called
the glide 'er inn.
(there used to be an airport
across the street.)

and people say bukowski has sold out
because he drinks german wine
and sometimes german beer
instead of rotgut.

yes, people say bukowski has sold out
because, i guess, he didn't stay poor forever,
didn't stay known only to them forever,
didn't stay their property forever,
didn't die in some form of dependency on them.

people say bukowski has sold out because he
(1) made money for what he would have written anyway;
(2) made money writing some things he wouldn't
have written anyway, but which he ended up
being able to write very well;
(3) found legal ways to keep his earnings
from the tax man by having fun with it.

i say he seems to be spending his money
with good sense and with style,
and i am not a bit surprised.

HOW YOU GET AN APPOINTMENT AT THE PRE-PAID HEALTH CARE
CENTER

the appointment girl will,
with her uncanny sense for such things,
offer you a time you can't be there.

when you turn it down,

she will say sarcastically,
"i thought you said
it was an emergency."

when you say that it is an emergency,
she will say, "your prior engagement
must be extremely important then."

that is the point at which, in measured tones,
you say, "it is. it's with my attorney."

HARSH REALITY

watching two or more women
make love to one another
is a well documented male sexual fantasy,
a staple of porn.

but after sitting in a large audience
full of admirers of adrienne rich last night,

i don't think i'll ever have that fantasy again.

GETTING INVOLVED

i'm leaving my girlfriend's place
at 4:00 on a saturday morning
and on the way to my car
i pass a car immobile at an intersection.
the driver is slumped back against the seat.

i want to get home,
but i get to thinking that the driver
may be dying of a stroke or something,
or that some other drunk
may come around the bend
and plough into him,

so i go to the window
and say, "hey, old buddy, wake up;
the cops may come along any minute!
come on, you gotta get this thing out of here ..."

it takes me a couple of minutes
to have any effect on him
and when i finally do
he turns to me
the look of the living dead,
hits the accelerator,