



Love Is a Dog from Hell

Charles Bukowski

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Poems rising from and returning to Bukowski's personal experiences reflect people, objects, places, and events of the external world, and reflects on them, on their way out and back.

Love Is a Dog from Hell Details

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From Reader Review Love Is a Dog from Hell for online ebook

Arity Das says

You either love Bukowski or you don't. There is no in between these two choices.

Life as we live it - is depicted in his verses like a nude woman, stripped off all covers and ornaments, bared, with all the beauty and ugliness. There's no pretension, there's no guilt, only bare faces with intense eyes of his muses, and objects and every little nice things and dirty stuff, lots of drunkenness and love, in various forms. I love this book of poems and I don't need to say why. You like reading Bukowski because you just do, giving particular reasons would never be okay and enough.

Here's one of my many favorite pieces-

"There is a loneliness in this world so great
that you can see it in the slow movement of
the hands of a clock.

people so tired
mutilated
either by love or no love."

Amira Mahmoud says

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Bukowski, the poet that not even translation betrays him, this is how I found Bukowski. An amazing poet that has rich soiled land in which he can plow however he wants according to his rich dictionary, and its enormous space yields him great production, even though some of his writings words isn't taken from old English but rather from modern English or papers English, and he intentionally do so, so he chooses easier words and rather pour his focus on the poetic image.

The loneliness that's caused by marginalization has remained for many years between him and America's critics, that they didn't even count him to any group that thrives with literaturic life not to mention he was independent except of himself; so he distend himself from any institutionalized or governmental representation and rather remained loyal to the proletariat oppressed class.

The poet has to be free from everything or else...the poet won't fly.

Bukowski had his own technique in books that his poetics impacted his narratives that his novels seemed poetic deepened in good narration far from any trace of a plot, in return, novels, the dialogue mode, and the multi personality in poetic texts has given him another dimension even though that's not innovative in poetry

but it was one of his poetic marks.

His clear care for the oppressed class gives him points on the humane side and the intellectual orientation; As a reader however I wouldn't want to read a collection that all of its poems addresses one subject only like his collections that are written for the poor, oppression and the destitute. So, from a few collections his language started to be repetitive, despite different portrayed images, and his subjects started to get repetitive, despite different portrayed images also, and he was prolonging a single text on the expense of language. But the poetic image stays to be his differentiating mark.

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“she is no longer
the beautiful woman
she was. she sends
photos of herself
sitting upon a rock
by the ocean
alone and damned.
I could have had
her once. I wonder
if she thinks I
could have
saved her?”

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“when the phone rings
I too would like to hear words
that might ease
some of this.”

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Burning in Water, Drowning in Flame
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It Catches My Heart in Its Hands

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Joseph says

70s shock and exploitation on the surface. A little deeper down brutal honesty, emptiness, and openness. Poems like "The Bee" expose much more of the poet's soul than may have been intended.

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Huda Yahya says

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Mutasim Billah says

First published in 1977, Love Is a Dog from Hell is a collection of Bukowski's poetry from the mid-seventies. A classic in the Bukowski canon, Love Is a Dog from Hell is a raw, lyrical, exploration of the exigencies, heartbreaks, and limits of love.

I see you drinking at a fountain with tiny

blue hands, no, your hands are not tiny

they are small, and the fountain is in France

where you wrote me that last letter and

I answered and never heard from you again.

you used to write insane poems about

ANGELS AND GOD, all in upper case, and you

knew famous artists and most of them

were your lovers, and I wrote back, it's all right,
go ahead, enter their lives, I'm not jealous
because we've never met. we got close once in
New Orleans, one half block, but never met, never
touched. so you went with the famous and wrote
about the famous, and, of course, what you found out
is that the famous are worried about
their fame—not the beautiful young girl in bed
with them, who gives them that, and then awakens
in the morning to write upper case poems about
ANGELS AND GOD. we know God is dead, they've told
us, but listening to you I wasn't sure. maybe
it was the upper case. you were one of the
best female poets and **I told the publishers,**
editors, “print her, print her, she’s mad but she’s
magic. there’s no lie in her fire.” I loved you
like a man loves a woman he never touches, only
writes to, keeps little photographs of. I would have
loved you more if I had sat in a small room rolling a
cigarette and listened to you piss in the bathroom,
but that didn’t happen. your letters got sadder.
your lovers betrayed you. kid, I wrote back, all
lovers betray. it didn’t help. you said
you had a crying bench and it was by a bridge and
the bridge was over a river and you sat on the crying

*bench every night and wept for the lovers who had
hurt and forgotten you. I wrote back but never
heard again. a friend wrote me of your suicide
3 or 4 months after it happened. if I had met you
I would probably have been unfair to you or you
to me. it was best like this.*

- An Almost Made Up Poem

John says

Bukowski. Here's a poem.

I don't know how many bottles of beer
I have consumed while waiting for things
to get better
I don't know how much wine and whisky
and beer
mostly beer
I have consumed after
splits with women—
waiting for the phone to ring
waiting for the sound of footsteps,
and the phone to ring
waiting for the sounds of footsteps,
and the phone never rings
until much later
and the footsteps never arrive
until much later
when my stomach is coming up
out of my mouth
they arrive as fresh as spring flowers:
“what the hell have you done to yourself?
it will be 3 days before you can fuck me!”

the female is durable
she lives seven and one half years longer
than the male, and she drinks very little beer

because she knows it's bad for the figure.

while we are going mad
they are out
dancing and laughing
with horny cowboys.

well, there's beer
sacks and sacks of empty beer bottles
and when you pick one up
the bottle fall through the wet bottom
of the paper sack
rolling
clanking
spilling gray wet ash
and stale beer,
or the sacks fall over at 4 a.m.
in the morning
making the only sound in your life.

beer
rivers and seas of beer
the radio singing love songs
as the phone remains silent
and the walls stand
straight up and down
and beer is all there is.

Faith-Anne says

Bukowski is one of those poets you can show to people who swear up & down that poetry is all rhyming & flowers. Even if you hate Bukowski, you must admit that he's an original. I love Bukowski. His poems are a perfect break from the 'real' world. They're brutally honest & lovely in their grotesqueness. This collection is wonderful. Sure it isn't for the faint of heart, but Bukowski really does prove that poetry comes in all shapes & sizes.

Fede says

Just finished reading "Love Is a Dog From Hell". The book is lying on the rug and a Guinness is cooling my throat in the warmth of the living room. Only the fading light of the sunset comes through the Venetian blinds.

I type a couple of sentences. Delete them. Try again. Nothing.

I open my Moleskine random-thoughts notebook and read the last entry, in search of inspiration. I wrote it some nights ago, thinking about this book. About the way it was making me feel.

Yeah, love's a dog
a rabid
snarling dog
a stray dog rustling in
filthy trash bins, hunger-crazed
eaten by
scabies and vermin
and he does come from hell
a back street hell littered
with rotting garbage and beer cans
stinking of piss
of sour sex
of human failures

you walk every night down that street
eyes full of tears, mouth
echoing
with unsaid words
and pass by that dog
neither of you
acknowledging
the other

tonight
he hears you approaching
turns his
drooling muzzle
looks up at you

his eyes are turquoise blue
and bright like diamonds
they heal your wounds
with
scented ointments
turn your tears into
drops of rain

love is dog
a crippled
mangled dog
licking
the bites on your heart

For what it's worth, this is what I was left by this book.
Now stop laughing of my rambling, take a deep breath and listen.

The love Bukowski talks about is not tender. It's rough, dirty, vicious, often humiliating, sometimes cathartic.

It's the man sprawled sound asleep on the bed, snorting, hairy back and beer-belly. The man who lights a cigarette and takes a piss and belches and grunts and is hungover till noon. It's the woman who cuts her toenails and washes her stockings in the sink and leaves the door open, wrinkled neck and pear-shaped breasts and varicose veins fully displayed.

Whether you're male or female, it's all your teenage self hadn't been told about love. You had to find out by yourself. It's the pleasure flowing through your body during intercourse; the pain echoing in your bedroom (and in your heart) after another unhappy relationship; the regrets, the self-contempt, your face ageing day by day, the scent on your pillow - the last fading traces of someone who still found you desirable...

This is what these poems talk about. Dirt. Trivial and spiritual dirt. And the monstrous horrible Beauty that rises from the dirt like a drunk Phoenix:

"she has saved me
from everything that is
not here."

If you're looking for romance, oh you'd better keep away from Bukowski's poems. They would bring you back to reality. They would upset and disgust you.

You wouldn't even understand them.

"she was getting wet and open
like a flower in the rain,"

he says, describing an afternoon of sex and junk food. Just recall these lines on a rainy afternoon, walking across a garden. Pick up a flower and look at it with attention.

That's it.

To all of you who know what it is like to be devoured by lust and purity; to the broken-hearted; to the bohemians and the idealists:

This is the poetry of your life.

vie says

An Almost Made Up Poem

I see you drinking at a fountain with tiny
blue hands, no, your hands are not tiny
they are small, and the fountain is in France
where you wrote me that last letter and
I answered and never heard from you again.
you used to write insane poems about
ANGELS AND GOD, all in upper case, and you
knew famous artists and most of them
were your lovers, and I wrote back, it' all right,
go ahead, enter their lives, I' not jealous

because we' never met. we got close once in
New Orleans, one half block, but never met, never
touched. so you went with the famous and wrote
about the famous, and, of course, what you found out
is that the famous are worried about
their fame — not the beautiful young girl in bed
with them, who gives them that, and then awakens
in the morning to write upper case poems about
ANGELS AND GOD. we know God is dead, they' told
us, but listening to you I wasn' sure. maybe
it was the upper case. you were one of the
best female poets and I told the publishers,
editors, " her, print her, she' mad but she'
magic. there' no lie in her fire." I loved you
like a man loves a woman he never touches, only
writes to, keeps little photographs of. I would have
loved you more if I had sat in a small room rolling a
cigarette and listened to you piss in the bathroom,
but that didn' happen. your letters got sadder.
your lovers betrayed you. kid, I wrote back, all
lovers betray. it didn' help. you said
you had a crying bench and it was by a bridge and
the bridge was over a river and you sat on the crying
bench every night and wept for the lovers who had
hurt and forgotten you. I wrote back but never
heard again. a friend wrote me of your suicide
3 or 4 months after it happened. if I had met you
I would probably have been unfair to you or you
to me. it was best like this.

loveee.. loveeeee bukowski >:D<

s.penkevich says

*people are not good to each other.
perhaps if they were
our deaths would not be so sad.*

Love him or hate him, Charles Bukowski was a bitter, drunken asshole with a gift for putting onto paper all the ugliness and baseness hiding in the human heart. Before jumping into the discovery and thoughts that are the inspiration for this ramble about the dirty old writer, a few moments should be spent on the actual poetry found in this volume. I've always enjoyed the earlier Bukowski, before he became too jaded and bitter and let a few really tender moments flower within all the crassness. Love, and more specifically the failures and loss of it, are the heart of this collection. All through the poems here are allusions to the 'red haired woman', whom Bukowski shows a deep regret in loosing. Much of the crassness feels reactionary to this loss of love

as Bukowski documents a spiral into dirty, drunken debauchery and madness as a method of hardening the heart against such pains. Love is replaced with lust to erase loneliness, yet, ironically, it only instills further self-hatred and builds towards a crippling loneliness.

*there is always one woman
to save you from another
and as that woman saves you
she makes ready to
destroy.*

Bukowski is that drunk asshole always diving to the bottom of a glass, keeping shallow relationships and never trusting women. He is, at best, a rude misogynist, but under the layers of dysphemism, we see a heart drowning in sorrow (and booze). There is still some charm though, he is often humorous in his crassness, and there are moments where he truly shows remorse for the terrible manner in which human beings treat one another. He did not really like people, probably a lot of that having to do with his fear of being hurt by others. His poetry is rather simple, nothing complex to pick apart, and very rarely uses many poetic devices, but that is what makes it so powerful. It cuts right to the heart. He often describes the writing process as pounding the keys like a prizefighter, and often refers to his typewriter as his 'piano' (Bukowski was a huge fan of classical music, especially Brahms, and compares music and writing often).

This collection contains a poem that not only introduced me to Knut Hamsun (who is now one of my favorite authors), but I've always kept in mind as a darkly comical motivation for being a writer:

How to be a Good Writer
*you've got to fuck a great many women
beautiful women
and write a few decent love poems.
and don't worry about age
and/or freshly-arrived talents.
just drink more beer
more and more beer
and attend the racetrack at least once a
week
and win
if possible
learning to win is hard -
any slob can be a good loser.
and don't forget your Brahms
and your Bach and your
beer.
don't overexercise.
sleep until moon.
avoid paying credit cards
or paying for anything on
time.
remember that there isn't a piece of ass
in this world over \$50
(in 1977).
and if you have the ability to love*

*love yourself first
but always be aware of the possibility of
total defeat
whether the reason for that defeat
seems right or wrong -
an early taste of death is not necessarily
a bad thing.
stay out of churches and bars and museums,
and like the spider be
patient -
time is everybody's cross,
plus
exile
defeat
treachery
all that dross.
stay with the beer.
beer is continuous blood.
a continuous lover.
get a large typewriter
and as the footsteps go up and down
outside your window
hit that thing
hit it hard
make it a heavyweight fight
make it the bull when he first charges in
and remember the old dogs
who fought so well:
Hemingway, Celine, Dostoevsky, Hamsun.
If you think they didn't go crazy
in tiny rooms
just like you're doing now
without women
without food
without hope
then you're not ready.
drink more beer.
there's time.
and if there's not
that's all right
too.*

While looking to find more references to Hamsun in this collection, I noticed that within the margins, my own handwriting was mixed with that of another's. It turns out that one of my closest friends, a friend I have not seen in years and have been separated from by the circumstances of life that separate even the closest of people, had gone through this book and left me all sorts of comments for me to think about, as well as comment upon my own reaction. It was like having a conversation across 3 years time with an old friend, the

type of friend that is more like a brother. The power of language and writing seemed more important than ever suddenly, as it is a tool tying people together across space and time. This particular collection couldn't be more fitting to find these notes written years earlier (I have a few other books where we both wrote notes to each other, such as *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* which we were both reading at the same time while he was our 'guy on couch' at an old apartment), both with Bukowski's discussions of loneliness, but as it was indicative of my current state at that time. A few years ago was a bit of a darker period where the group of us had close ties and stayed rather under the radar of society. I would go to class, return to our apartment and we would spend all our time playing music, drinking and discussing film and books. This was a bitter period, as I had been in that post-heartbreak stage where the world seems ugly and, like Bukowski, just wanted to revel in my bitterness for awhile. Finding these notes brings back only the happy memories of those times and makes you realize that the loss of someone you loved as a brother is far more important to you than the loss of any former lover, and these are the people you miss most down the line in the birth pangs of some lonely, introspective morning. This all reminds me very much of the *Savage Detectives* and that sadness of people spreading out across the map as friendships rust and wash away in the changing tides.

What struck me most was his notes about the sadness that permeates this collection. In one margin is written: '*Bukowski seems genuinely troubled/depressed by the imagery of failed relationships and their aftermath – the failings of love and the intended + unintended ways we hurt one another*'. That more or less sums this book up. I also enjoyed moments where he circled lines such as '*oh brothers, we are the sickest and lowest of the breed*', which summed up that summer we all spent together in our tiny, dirty Ypsilanti apartment. He was also kind enough to highlight every mention of the 'redhead' and string together the story that is told through fragments.

Enough of that emotional reflection though, nobody likes that sort of stuff. Which leads me to a quote from Neil Young (my favorite, and it pains me to be referencing such an obvious song instead of some lesser-known greater one) that 'every junky is like a setting sun'. They are on their way out, difficult, if not painful, to look right at, yet beautiful. Bukowski fits this bill, as his life and works are painful to watch, but there is some beauty in there. Also like a setting sun, people like this aren't something you can hang around long or you will get hurt (or loose your vision if you stare at the sun too long!). This is a messy metaphor, but I swear it's going somewhere. Poems like those of Bukowski, or people who fit this bill such as drinking buddies, are good for certain times and places, however, you can't linger there. When you are feeling dirty and ugly and crass, Bukowski is wonderful fun. Works like his are empowering at those times because you can relate and laugh along with, and, primarily, because it is reassuring to see that others with this same ugliness are able to create something beautiful. Once you've had your fill though, the time comes to move forward, as this sort of ugliness can only lead to more ugliness and eventually it will fill you and drag you down with it. These types of works are very reactionary, only as a venomous bite toward what hurts you and not a truly constructive method of moving on. The mid to late 2000s was full of this sort of behavior, look at the emo culture, where people wanted to express their disdain for the world around them (the emo culture did it with more self loathing and tears, whereas something like Bukowski is more about pushing someone away through acting depraved and hard when you actually truly want them to get close to you). However, we can't always be angry and we have to move on, get over our problems, or they win. They become us. We can't be simply made up of only our failures and sadness, we must learn to deal with them, get past them, and win by being stronger than our problems.

I tend to rag on Chuck Palahniuk a lot, but he really fits this idea for me, and if I can quickly explain it, perhaps I won't have to keep using him as an example anymore. His works were very popular in the era mentioned above (okay, I know Bukowski wasn't writing then, but this has transcended Bukowski's works into a discussion about getting over problems), because they were a gripe against social forces. Chuck P. took hold of many adolescents through writing stories with adults who are characterized like angst

teenagers. They view the world and societal constructs as threatening, as something holding them down, and turn to nihilism to deal with that. However, nihilism will only negate things, it won't transcend them. I lost interest in Palahniuk once I realized that he would never offer a true solution to the problems he imposes on his characters (as well as simply recycling characters and techniques, but that is a different discussion). I couldn't wallow in his cynicism and darkness any longer, and turned to bigger, better and brighter authors. I have never looked back. Yet, I can't condemn him entirely, because he fit my 17 year old needs for awhile. I enjoyed Fight Club at the time, Choke made me laugh, and sometimes it is good to wallow in the ugliness. But stay to long and the pity-party, because that is all it really is, becomes sad and pathetic.

All in all, I'm glad I've read Bukowski, but I feel like my life has taken me places where his opinions no longer really reach me. I can't wallow in that sadness, and I find his lusts rather creepy and his woman-bashing rather offensive. However, that is exactly what he was striving for. Still, those moments of beauty are worth coming back for, and I can't express enough how cool it was to find the notes from my friend. Mostly, being able to reminisce about those days of stupid, wild youth is what really holds my heart.

3.5/5

Okay, and this poem, Dinosauria, We is great (although not from this collection)

Shimaa Mokhtar says

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June says

Don't tell me I don't get it. I know I probably don't. But Jesus Christ, if I have to read one more poem about the women he's screwed and the women who've screwed him, I'm going to start writing my own collection of poetry about the cereal I eat in the morning and try to publish that.

Granted, I am not a great lover of poetry. And I have very low tolerance for people who want to eloquently bemoan about their shitty lives without seemingly caring to get their shit together. Honestly, I'm not really sure why I picked this book up - somewhere hidden away in the back of my mind was the voice telling me I wouldn't like it. But every once in a while I get a hankering for poetry, for the streamlined and condensed collection of ideas, words or imagery they provide. And I read a Bukowski poem I liked once. Something about a car going down the street or something, I don't know. So I thought I'd give it a chance.

So yeah, I just don't get Bukowski, I guess. And honestly, I sometimes think I'm predisposed to not like him because of a certain type of Bukowski-lovers I encountered during college - people who were cooler than me and knew it, who silently smoked clove cigarettes, and refused to be aware of anything pop culture related past the 1960's. I pick up Bukowski now and I'm instantaneously reminded of this exclusive group of individuals who were gifted in amplifying my own insecurities. It's like this embarrassing Pavlovian reaction, inciting a domino of emotions - first my self esteem dips, then I get depressed, then I get irritated for getting depressed, and then I just get shifty-eyed and distrusting of my own feelings and wonder if I need a therapist.

Kidding. Kind of. Just don't make me read him anymore, okay?

Fatema Hassan , bahrain says

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Ahmed Oraby says

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