

## DOC A

### 1

I was sitting in my office, my lease had expired and McKelvey was starting eviction proceedings. It was a hellish hot day and the air conditioner was broken. A fly crawled across the top of my desk. I reached out with the open palm of my hand and sent him out of the game. I wiped my hand on my right pants leg as the phone rang.

I picked it up. "Ah yes," I said.

"Do you read Celine?" a female voice asked. Her voice sounded quite sexy. I had been lonely for some time. Decades.

"Celine," I said, "ummm..."

"I want Celine," she said. "I've got to have him."

Such a sexy voice, it was getting to me, really.

"Celine?" I said.

"Give me a little background. Talk to me, lady. Keep talking..."  
"Zip up," she said.

I looked down.

"How did you know?" I asked.

"Never mind. I want Celine."

"Celine is dead."

"He isn't. I want you to find him. I want him."

"I might find his bones."

"No, you fool, he's alive!"

"Where?"

"Hollywood. I hear he's been hanging around Red Koldowsky's bookstore."

"Then why don't *you* find him?"

"Because first I want to know if he's the *real* Celine. I have to be sure, quite sure."

"But why did you come to me? There are a hundred dicks in this town." "John Barton recommended you."

"Oh, Barton, yeah. Well, listen, I'll have to have some kind of advance. And I'll have to see you personally."

"I'll be there in a few minutes," she said.

She hung up. I zipped up.

And waited.

### 2

She walked in.

Now, I mean, it just wasn't fair. Her dress fit so tight it almost split the seams. Too many chocolate malts. And she walked on heels so high they looked like little stilts. She walked like a drunken cripple, staggering around the room. A glorious dizziness of flesh.

"Sit down, lady," I said.

She put it down and crossed her legs high, damn near knocked my eyes out.

"It's good to see you, lady," I said.

"Stop gawking, please. It's nothing that you haven't seen before." "You're wrong there, lady. Now may I have your name?"

"Lady Death."

"Lady Death? You from the circus? The movies?"

"No."

"Place of birth?"

"It doesn't matter."

"Year of birth?"

"Don't try to be funny..."

"Just trying to get some background..."

I got lost somehow, began staring up her legs. I was always a leg man. It was the first thing I saw when I was born. But then I was trying to get out. Ever since I have been working in the other direction and with pretty lousy luck.

She snapped her fingers.

"Hey, come out of it!"

"Huh?" I looked up.

"The Celine case. Remember?" "Yeah, sure."

I unfolded a paperclip, pointed the end toward her. "I'll need a check for services rendered."

"Of course," she smiled. "What are your rates?" "6 dollars an hour."

She got out her checkbook, scribbled away, ripped the check out and tossed it to me. It landed on the desk. I picked it up. \$240. I hadn't seen that much money since I hit an exacta at Hollywood Park in 1988.

"Thank you, Lady..."

"...Death," she said.

"Yes," I said. "Now fill me in a little on this so-called Celine. You said something about a bookstore?"

"Well, he's been hanging around Red's bookstore, browsing...asking about Faulkner, Carson McCullers. Charles Manson..."

"Hangs around the bookstore, huh? Hmm..."

### **Charles Bukowski, *Pulp* (1994)**

"You Don't Know What Love Is"

You don't know what love is Bukowski said  
I'm 51 years old look at me  
I'm in love with this young broad  
I got it bad but she's hung up too  
so it's all right man that's the way it should be  
I get in their blood and they can't get me out  
They try everything to get away from me  
but they all come back in the end  
They all came back to me except  
the one I planted  
I cried over that one  
but I cried easy in those days  
Don't let me get onto the hard stuff man  
I get mean then  
I could sit here and drink beer  
with you hippies all night  
I could drink ten quarts of this beer  
and nothing it's like water  
But let me get onto the hard stuff  
and I'll start throwing people out windows  
I'll throw anybody out the window

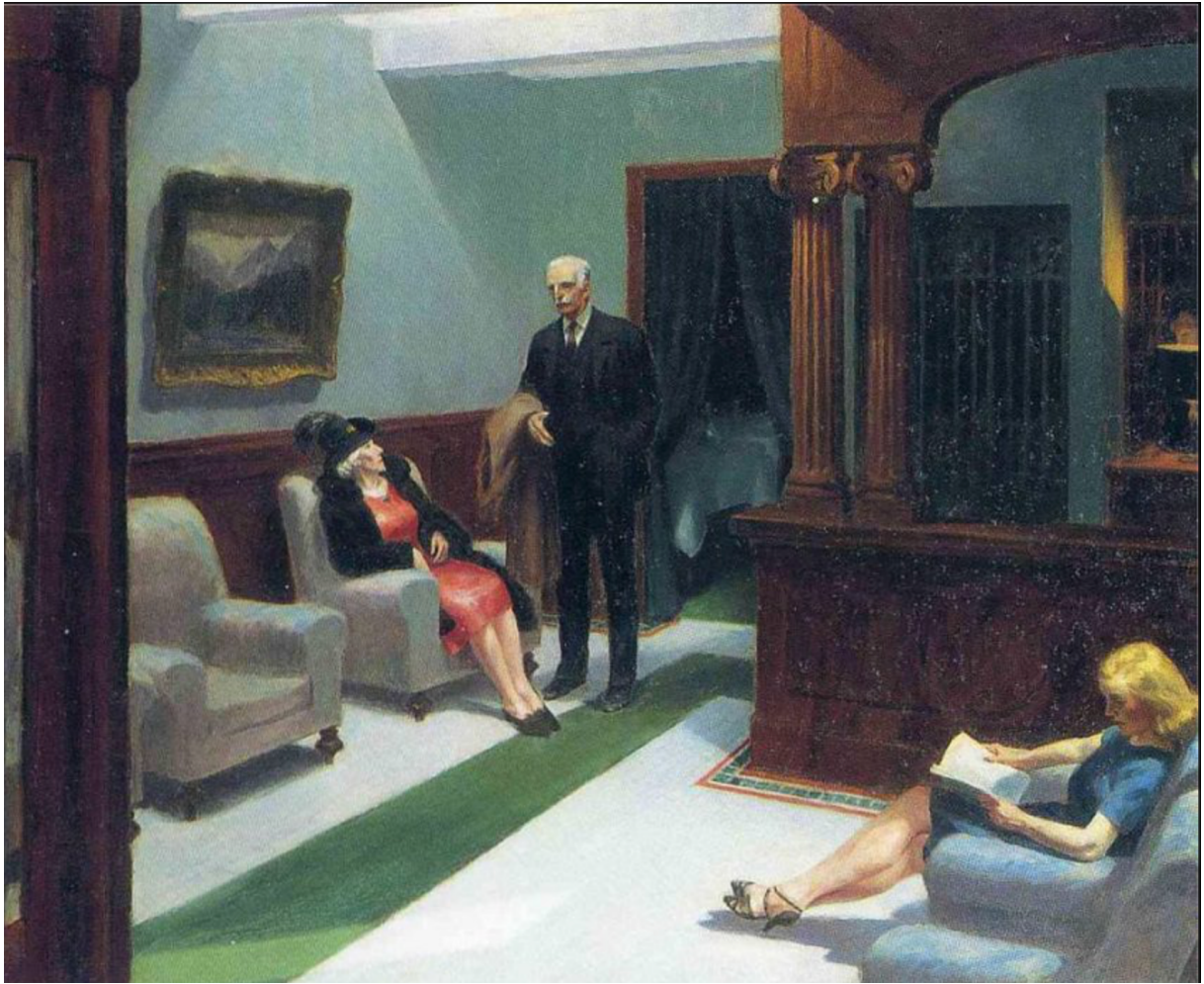
I've done it  
But you don't know what love is  
You don't know because you've never  
been in love it's that simple  
I got this young broad see she's beautiful  
She calls me Bukowski  
Bukowski she says in this little voice  
and I say What  
But you don't know what love is  
I'm telling you what it is  
but you aren't listening  
There isn't one of you in this room  
would recognize love if it stepped up  
and bugged you in the ass  
I used to think poetry readings were a copout  
Look I'm 51 years old and I've been around  
I know they're a copout  
but I said to myself Bukowski  
starving is even more of a copout  
So there you are and nothing is like it should be  
That fellow what's his name Galway Kinnell  
I saw his picture in a magazine  
He has a handsome mug on him  
but he's a teacher  
Christ can you imagine  
But then you're teachers too  
here I am insulting you already  
No I haven't heard of him  
or him either  
They're all termites  
Maybe it's ego I don't read much anymore  
but these people who build  
reputations on five or six books  
termites  
Bukowski she says  
Why do you listen to classical music all day  
Can't you hear her saying that  
Bukowski why do you listen to classical music all day  
That surprises you doesn't it  
You wouldn't think a crude bastard like me  
could listen to classical music all day  
Brahms Rachmaninoff Bartok Telemann  
Shit I couldn't write up here  
Too quiet up here too many trees  
I like the city that's the place for me  
I put on my classical music each morning  
and sit down in front of my typewriter  
I light a cigar and I smoke it like this see  
and I say Bukowski you're a lucky man  
Bukowski you've gone through it all  
and you're a lucky man

and the blue smoke drifts across the table  
and I look out the window onto DeLongpre Avenue  
and I see people walking up and down the sidewalk  
and I puff on the cigar like this  
and then I lay the cigar in the ashtray like this and take a deep breath  
and I begin to write  
Bukowski this is the life I say  
it's good to be poor it's good to have hemorrhoids  
it's good to be in love  
But you don't know what it's like  
You don't know what it's like to be in love  
If you could see her you'd know what I mean  
She thought I'd come up here and get laid  
She just knew it  
She told me she knew it  
Shit I'm 51 years old and she's 25  
and we're in love and she's jealous  
Jesus it's beautiful  
she said she'd claw my eyes out if I came up here  
and got laid  
Now that's love for you  
What do any of you know about it  
Let me tell you something  
I've met men in jail who had more style  
than the people who hang around colleges  
and go to poetry readings  
They're bloodsuckers who come to see  
if the poet's socks are dirty  
or if he smells under the arms  
Believe me I won't disappoint em  
But I want you to remember this  
there's only one poet in this room tonight  
only one poet in this town tonight  
maybe only one real poet in this country tonight  
and that's me  
What do any of you know about life  
What do any of you know about anything  
Which of you here has been fired from a job  
or else has beaten up your broad  
or else has been beaten up by your broad  
I was fired from Sears and Roebuck five times  
They'd fire me then hire me back again  
I was a stockboy for them when I was 35  
and then got canned for stealing cookies  
I know what's it like I've been there  
I'm 51 years old now and I'm in love  
This little broad she says  
Bukowski  
and I say What and she says  
I think you're full of shit  
and I say baby you understand me

She's the only broad in the world  
man or woman  
I'd take that from  
But you don't know what love is  
They all came back to me in the end too  
every one of em came back  
except that one I told you about  
the one I planted We were together seven years  
We used to drink a lot  
I see a couple of typers in this room but  
I don't see any poets  
I'm not surprised  
You have to have been in love to write poetry  
and you don't know what it is to be in love  
that's your trouble  
Give me some of that stuff  
That's right no ice good  
That's good that's just fine  
So let's get this show on the road  
I know what I said but I'll have just one  
That tastes good  
Okay then let's go let's get this over with  
only afterwards don't anyone stand close  
to an open window

**Raymond Carver, *All of Us : The Collected Poems* (1996)**

DOC C



Edward Hopper, *Hotel Lobby* (1943)