

Julie Finch

Back to Hank

I think someone like Bukowski  
Would have called it a backbreaker,  
Plain and simple, no dressing it up.  
That all passion is madness dug  
From the grave, the hollow growing  
Ever deeper, the more you spend,  
The less you save of your own life.  
That love, if that is what it's to be called,  
Is an iffy hand at best, a currency not  
To be trusted on any market, a plain  
Bad bet.  
Yet the man himself fell and fell often,  
Working that shovel of paper and type,  
Writing his guts out, writing to women,  
Wooing them outrageously, pockmarked  
Rake, stealing them from other beds,  
Taking them easy, taking them right out  
From under the noses of men more handsome,  
Successful, and certainly more sober, more sane.  
It's a conundrum, this love business.  
That saying? "You made your bed, now lie in it"?  
Well in love's case, it takes two.  
I think of Bukowski, madman and prophet  
I'd like to ask him what he thinks of you,  
Wherever you are,  
And whether you're worthy of the laborer  
The fallen, toiling, foolhardy star.

Once

When the world with its ample crush  
Has turned its body against you  
Remember the time we owned  
Every street, every star, every bird  
That flew from its solemn joy out  
Into the awaiting world, where it sang,  
Miraculously, among the living.  
Remember the sky that would not forsake us,  
The strangers who did not look away,  
The lights of their faces saying Yes to  
Whatever it was we stood for in their eyes.  
Remember the night that did not close in,  
But instead, expanded with every step  
And led us back into each other's gaze.  
Remember grace, and its blossoming.  
Remember when the morning arrived rich,  
Undaunted by the journey beckoning forward.  
Remember that you were cherished fully, and wholly held  
By arms that could barely reach beyond  
The blessings.  
When this earth and its infinite solitude spin  
Outward upon your every path,  
Remember there was a time when we walked as one  
Under silent shades of an evening's falling,  
When we conjured the unsayable, the bold and certain  
Unfolding of a love that was not mistaken or misspent  
But sprang like tulips in an empty field  
To be lavished, to be revered, to be free.

## Beacon

Burn as if the mountains will not last forever,  
Shine as though the farthest star were not but  
A fiery homage to its former self,  
Dead now, and yet still a beacon  
Illuminating this dream, this sky, this space.  
Be the flame that refuses to dim,  
The ache of every arching doorway  
That longs to summon someone home,  
Stand tall as the tree before it is felled,  
Arrive like the arrow as it pierces skin  
To bone, be the steady rock and water  
That whiles its edge to smoother stone.  
We are here to give ourselves away---  
Incandescent, yearning, vast in our capacity  
To bear what is and what must be done  
To save each other, to save each other.  
Be the light, the stream, the sun  
Cast yourself upon the water and stretch  
Like the ocean to its most longing shore  
Giving, silent, awakened, and truly alive.  
Avail yourself to miracles.