



"THE CAT IS THE BEAUTIFUL DEVIL."

— CHARLES BUKOWSKI

the mockingbird

the mockingbird had been following the cat
all summer
mocking mocking mocking
teasing and cocksure;
the cat crawled under rockers on porches
tail flashing
and said something very angry to the mockingbird
which I didn't understand.

yesterday the cat walked calmly up the driveway
with the mockingbird alive in its mouth,
wings fanned, beautiful wings fanned and flopping,
feathers parted like a woman's legs in sex,
and the bird was no longer mocking,
it was asking, it was praying
but the cat
striding down through centuries
would not listen.

I saw it crawl under a yellow car
with the bird
to bargain it to another place.

summer was over.

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love is the crushed cats
of the universe



the history of a tough motherfucker

he came to the door one night wet boney beaten and
terrorized.

a white cross-eyed tailless cat

I took him in and fed him and he stayed
got to trust until a friend drove up the driveway
and ran him over

I took what was left to a vet who said, "not much
chance . . . give him these pills and wait . . . his backbone
is crushed, it was crushed once before but somehow
melded, if he lives he'll never walk again, look at
these x-rays, he's been shot, look here, the pellets
are still in him . . . also, he once had a tail, somebody
cut it off . . ."

I took the cat back, it was a hot summer, one of the
hottest summers in decades, I put him on the bathroom
floor, gave him water and pills, he wouldn't eat, he
wouldn't touch the water, I dipped my finger into it
and wet his mouth and I talked to him, I didn't go any-
where, I put in a lot of bathroom time and I talked to
him and gently touched him and he just looked back at
me with those pale blue crossed eyes as the days went
by he made his first move
dragging himself forward by his front legs
(the rear ones wouldn't move)

he made it to the litter box
 crawled over and in,
 that was like the horns of chance and possible victory
 blowing away in the bathroom and into the city, I
 related to that cat—I'd had it bad, not that kind of
 bad but bad enough . . .

one morning he got up, stood up, fell back down and he
 just looked at me.

"you make it, man," I said to him, "you're a good one . . ."

he kept trying it, getting up and falling down, finally
 he walked a few steps, he was like a drunk weaving, the
 rear legs just didn't want to do it and he fell again, rested,
 then got up . . .

you know the rest: now he's better than ever, cross-eyed,
 almost toothless, all the grace is back, and that look in
 the eyes never left . . .

and now sometimes I'm interviewed, they want to hear about
 life and literature and I get drunk and hold up my cross-eyed
 shot runover de-tailed cat before them and I say, "look, look
 at *this!*"

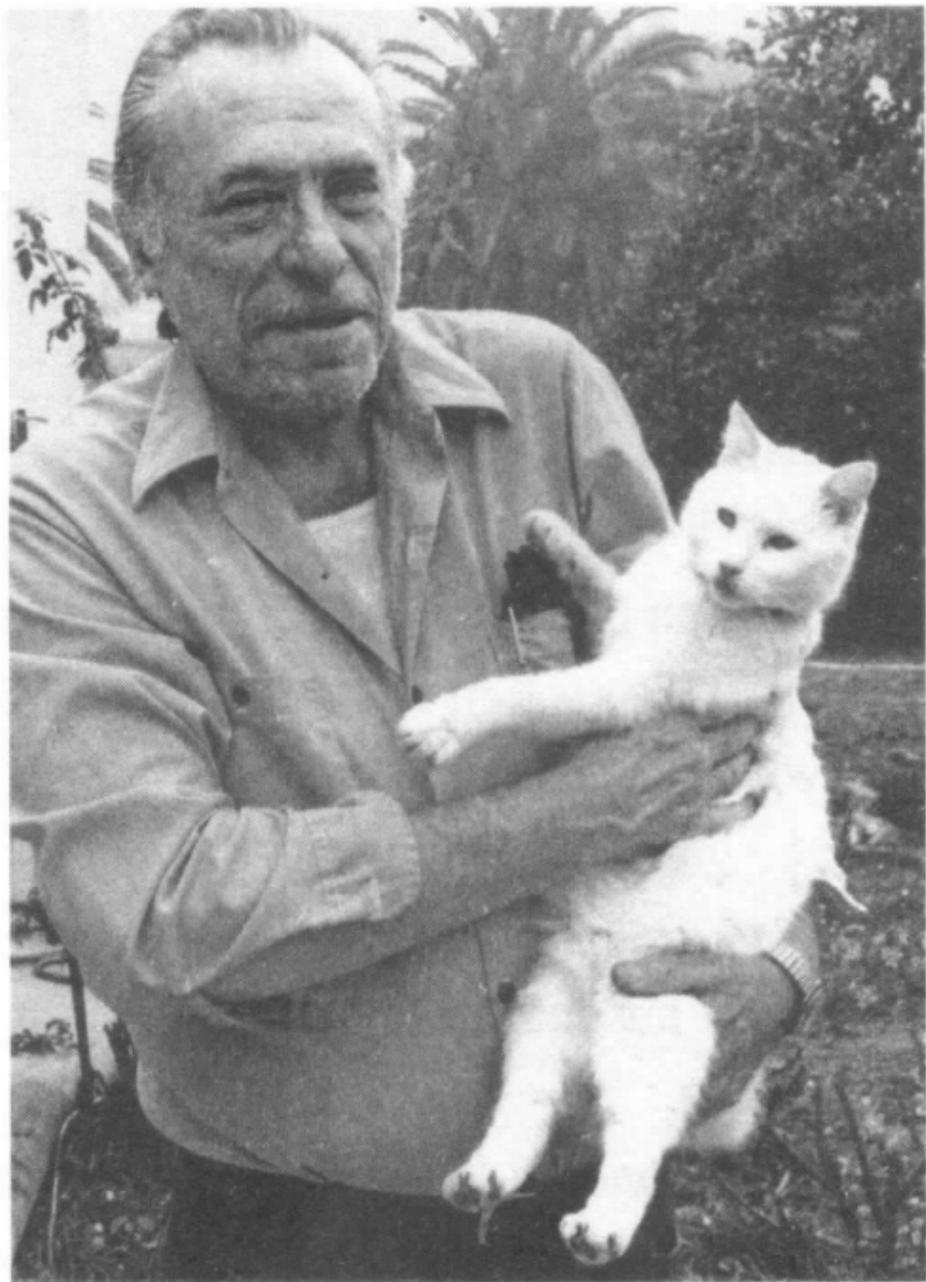
but they don't understand, they say something like, "you
 say you've been influenced by Celine . . ."

"no," I hold the cat up before them, "by what happens, by
 things like this, by *this!* . . ."

I wobble the cat, holding him up under the front legs in
 the smokey and drunken light; he's relaxed, he knows things . . .

it's about then that almost all the interviews end.
 although I am very proud sometimes when I see the interviews
 later and there I am and there is the cat and we are photo-
 graphed together . . .

he knows it's bullshit too but it helps get the old catfood,
 right?



Manx