

The Day Ivan Retired

A wise old owl sat in the oak
The more he saw the less he spoke

Frank told me about a town north of here named
Inn City but just as often as not called Sin City
or Gin City. The cowboys would ride for days to
get to Inn City because they had a place there,

a honkytonk, called The Owl. And it was famous for
its couplet and the fact that when you walked in
a girl or two would sort of disengage herself from
the wall and join you at the bar. The girls drank
wine-and-seltzer at 25¢ a shot and the tough guys
drank rot-gut whiskey right out of the mine shaft.

Frank had a Chevy coupe he called the Ground Gainer
so he took that and a friend and the advice to file
the sight off his .45 right up to the front door of
The Owl.

"How come you were supposed to file the sight off,
so you could draw faster?"

"So it wouldn't hurt so much when they shoved it up
my ass. Sin City was a bad place to mess around in."

But it wasn't bad for Frank that day because when he
got drunk he started to play the piano and when
he started to play the piano the girls thought
that was just about the most wonderful thing

they'd ever heard. There was one, a chunky little
brunette, who would not stop kissing him.

"I can feel those tits of hers yet and smell her
breath; she'd just finished eating an onion.

And you know, Kurtage, I took Mommy up to Inn
City not long ago and I swear that if you don't
know just where it is on that little side road
why you don't know you've been there."