

kiss me like you kissed that ATD case,
she said.

kiss me like you kissed Dale,
I said,
and then kiss me like you kissed that
Japanese wrestler.

kiss me like you kissed Gerda,
she said,
and then kiss me like you kissed Bonnie.

I never kissed Bonnie,
I said.

you never kissed Bonnie?

hell no. kiss me like you've kissed all the guys
I haven't heard about lately --
guys under piers, at dances, on horseback, in poolhalls
and bowling alleys, at Mercedes-Benz, in closets,
waiting rooms, madhouses and gas stations ...

kiss me, she said, like you've kissed all the whores in
the world ...

umm, she said, that's good
we've really been fucking around
too much.

-- Charles Bukowski

Los Angeles CA

ALL THE BOYS

are at the Vagabond Inn Motel & Coffee Shop
again this morning. We bum cigarettes and
interrupt each other. The smoke rises
to the ceiling and is trapped by
an ionosphere of pronouns.

Outside the black guys are emptying wastebaskets
and giving the power sign and laughing about
last night.

Every time the phone rings we all look up
expecting to be summoned by Miss September
or one of those Hollywood starlets or
somebody else's wife

when all of a sudden a girl comes down to swim. She is of such extraordinary beauty that surely wherever she goes a thousand ships launch themselves.

Everybody's mouth rounds, the conversation settles around our feet like old dogs and damned if it isn't time to go to work and I've had enough of this rotten coffee and my old lady's going to raise hell as it is.

Outside the porters fail the asst. manager's wastebasket inspection. They look at their feet like bad dancers and say, "Yes, sir."

THE CROWD

Out of nowhere she said that although she'd never slept with another man while we'd been together, she was burning for someone else.

I pointed out that the way things were arranged she could do just about anything she wanted. What I wanted was to be spared the details.

She called me at work the next day and it was blow-by-blow, so there was trouble. But of course I was right. She was sorry.

It got pretty regular after that. Sometimes it turned me on but mostly, like a closet light, just off. I told her that before she brought home video tapes we should split up.

No, never. She would change. So she changed her clothes and went out.

A week later I got a note saying that she still loved me and, no matter who she was with, thought of me. She sincerely hoped that I thought of her, too, and not when I was mad or lonely but all the time, no matter how intimate the circumstances.

SHE SAID IT'D BE THIRTY FIVE DOLLARS

so I came up with it. She poured me a drink, had another for herself. She licked her lips and winked, she puckered up and gave her shoulders a little shake, she wet one finger and dabbed