

SILK

silken kneecaps
blue garters
pink garters
all through the depression
better than the
N.R.A.
the W.P.A.
silken legs for
Cagney and Gable and
all the boys in the neighborhood.
now that pantyhose is worn
a man no longer gets to watch
a strange woman on the street
with her fine legs
pulling her stockings up
stretching that silk over the
kneecaps
with just a glimpse of white flesh
and pink petticoat ...
I suppose it's best, though, that
women be comfortable.
I wouldn't like to go around pulling
my stockings up
continually, yet
some of us who remember
are still wistful about that era
dreaming of those legs of the
1930s

legs no longer beautiful now
or
legs that are dead
simply bone
but legs we remember the other
way
those legs that kept the silkworms
busy
legs that were for our fathers
our uncles
legs for Cagney and Gable and
all the boys in the neighborhood.

2ND. STREET, NEAR HOLLISTER, IN SANTA MONICA

my daughter is 13 years old
and the other afternoon
I drove to her court to take her
to lunch
and there was a beautiful woman

sitting on the porch
and I thought, well, she'll get
up and tell Marina that
I'm here.
and the beautiful woman stood up
and walked toward me.
it was my daughter.
she said, "Hi!"
I answered as if everything were
commonplace and we drove off
together.

AN OBSERVER

oh, she said, I know how you do it.
you sit down
you've got your wine and
your cigarette
you turn the radio on
you blow smoke
you touch your nose
you touch your face
you rub yourself along the throat
and then you begin:
ah, tick tick tick tick
tick tick tick tick
and you go on and on
and then you blow more smoke
drink more wine
you touch your nose
you touch your ear
and then
ah, tick tick tick tick
tick tick tick tick.
she's right
that's how I wrote this
one.

-- Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA