

political prisoners of said political state
which figured to me because I
didn't like his face or the way he combed his
hair
and I didn't like his English accent
nor did I like his slack-jawed
lemon-faced girlfriend who kept accusing me of
treachery "against the peoples of the world who
are fighting for the peoples of the world."

I've never read with a group again for any
reason
which is the best reason
of them all.

SICK

I had this night job and I'd sit in the bed
looking out the window in the late afternoon
the last of the sun would come into the room
through the leaves of this large bush
and when I thought about what was out there
waiting, I'd reach for the telephone.

the office clerk knew my voice:

"yes, Chinaski, what is it this time?"

"just write something down," I'd tell him,

"common cold, flu, the clap"

I'd hang up.

it was good watching it slowly get dark
listening to people coming home
parking their cars, turning on their TVs
making kitchen sounds, talking.

then I'd get up and drink four or five hours
alone,

then go back to bed and sleep.

and the next night at the factory everybody
would be very small and wrinkled
and I'd walk in tall and shining
all eyes and coolness,
secretly assured;

the men didn't understand and the girls
all loved me, and the foreman came forward
to speak to me of absenteeism
as I took out a cigarette, lit it and
listened.

-- Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA