

those mango-hued sea nymphs -- damn, I wish that lousy ferry would get in

FINAL FADE OUT.

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MS. LONELYHEARTS & MR. FEELGOOD

Things hadn't been going exactly swimmingly. She said we weren't 'communicating.' So we decided to go out to dinner & try to 'reconnect.'

We went to her favorite Italian restaurant but the smoking section was full. We took a number & went into the bar to wait for a table. I lit up an El Producto Corona.

"Did you hear about Lance?" she asked.

"He's marrying Monica, isn't he?" I said.

"Nooo!" she said.

I caught the bartender's eye.

"What would you like to drink?" I asked.

"A Chianti," she said.

"A glass of Chianti," I said to the bartender, "& a double vodka on the rocks."

"A double?" she said.

"Yes, I think I can handle it okay."

"Didn't you hear what happened to Lance?" she said.

"Uh, no"

I asked the bartender for another book of matches.

"Lance has been in the hospital," she said.

"You're kidding."

"Nooo! He was run down by a drunk driver."

"Is he all right?"

"He's home now, if that's what you mean."

I tried to catch the bartender's eye again.

"It happened down in L.A. during his tour," she said. "He was crossing the street in front of his hotel."

"How are the hands?" I asked.

"I mean, the hands are important to a jazz pianist."

"His hands are fine ... it's his head. He can't remember how to play the piano."

"Are you ready for another Chianti?"

"Not yet."

I ordered another double vodka & said to hold the twist.

"There you go again!" she said.

"So Lance has some kind of amnesia
& doesn't remember how to play the piano?"

"Yes, & he doesn't know Monica anymore ...
but he remembers Lisa."

"Wasn't Lisa his old girlfriend?"

"His former woman friend, yes. I had introduced them."

"You say Lance doesn't remember Monica
but that he remembers Lisa.
How can that be?"

"The doctors don't understand it either."

I needed another cigar.

The cigar box behind the bar was empty.

I went over to the cigarette machine & bought a pack.

"Now Lance & Lisa are back together again," she said.

"Uh"

"Of course, Monica has broken off the engagement."

"Sure"

"You know Murray, don't you? ... Murray?"

"Oh, Murray"

"Yes, he teaches at the U. He writes plays. One was
produced on campus last fall. Remember?"

"No"

"Murray is divorced."

"Ah"

"The other day I introduced Monica to Murray at lunch.
They seemed to hit it off right away."

"Two teachers, eh?"

"Monica has always been interested in the theatre."

"That's neat"

"Yes, I think so."

"I mean, now there's Lisa with Lance & Monica with Murray."

"Umnn ... I guess I see what you mean."

I was trying to snag the bartender again

when the maitre d' told us our table was ready.

We went into the dining room & were shown to a table
next to the restrooms.

"Is this the best table you have?" I asked.

"Yes, sir, it's the only one available in the smoking area."

"Let's go back to the bar & wait for another table," I said.

"Nooo!" she said. "I want to EAT!"

We took the table next to the restrooms.

"I wish you would give up SMOKING!" she said.

I told the waiter to bring a double vodka on the rocks & a bottle of red wine.

"I AM driving back!" she said.

THE POPE HAS SPOKEN

There's this still young poet,
who moved here to Bainbridge Island
a few years ago.

We would get together now & then
to drink some wine
& I got to know his work:
his stuff was good
& he was sending it out to magazines
but he wasn't finding many takers.

One day I met him
in the parking lot at the mall.

"How's it goin'?" I asked.

"Not so good," he said.

"I just got another batch of my poems
back in the mail."

"What kind of cover letters
have you been writing?" I asked.

"I don't write cover letters," he said.

"I let the poems stand or fall on their own."

"Don't be a dummy!" I said.

"You've gotta introduce yourself!"

"E. B. White didn't write cover letters," he said.

"Yeah," I said, "but E. B. White was married
to the right-hand gal of Harold Ross
over at The New Yorker!"

It was a November afternoon & getting cold.
The wind was whistling up my sleeves
& he still looked dubious.

"Listen to me!" I yelled. "The pope has spoken!
Start sending out letters with your fucking stuff!"