

"you better ease off on the drinking,"
I told him, "you've got a long way
to go."

THE SKATERS (1984)

I am sitting at a table in the mall drinking coffee while
Linda shops.
I sit above the ice rink where the children skate
in the afternoon,
mostly young girls dressed in blues, reds, whites, greens,
purples, yellows, orange.
they are all very good, swift, they spin and glide,
there are no collisions, even the tiniest of children are
very good, all —
tiny, larger and largest —
whirl through open spaces as if they were one
connecting body where each of the parts is aware of
where the other parts are.

I like it, very much, but then I think
as they get older they will stop skating, they will
stop singing, painting, dancing,
their interests will be diluted into acts of
survival,
the grace and the gamble will be substituted for a
heavy
surety.
but let's not feel too bad:
this happens to animals too:
they play just so long
then
stop...

then I see Linda, it appears that she has
found something shopping that
pleases her, she rushes toward my table, she
waves,
laughing.
I stand up, wave, smile,
things seem very humorous
as down below us they whirl and
glide.
some moments are nice, some are
nicer, some are even worth
writing
about.

— Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA