



Play the Piano Drunk Like a Percussion Instrument Until the Fingers Begin to Bleed a Bit

Charles Bukowski

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Play the Piano introduces Charles Bukowski's poetry from the 1970s. He leads a life full of gambling and booze but also finds love. These poems are full of lechery and romance as he struggles to mature.

Play the Piano Drunk Like a Percussion Instrument Until the Fingers Begin to Bleed a Bit Details

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Sophie says

**there is nothing to do
but drink
play the horse
bet on the poem.**

i love the fact that bukowski's poems seem to tell a story, however gruesome that story may be. most of his poems revolve around alcohol/*beers*,

I am dying of sadness and alcohol ,

cigarettes and love. however, bukowski has a somewhat uncanny perception of love,

I have, he went on, betrayed myself with belief, deluded myself with love tricked myself with sex .

and I like it when they tell me;they are having luck with a man;luck with their life;after surviving me;they have many joys due them;I make their lives seem better after me. , but that's actually fine by me, it makes me sympathize with him more.

**there was no living creature as foul as I
and all my poems were
false**

Raegan Butcher says

This is the first Bukowski book that I ever read. I think Bukowski's importance as an American writer will only grow in the 21st century. The man is already a Hemingway-like figure in Europe. The cultural snobs of academia in America have tried to ignore his work, but that will change. This collection is a grab-bag of previously uncollected poems that Bukowski regularly submitted to small press rags during the late sixties and seventies. These are from the seventies and there are some great poems here dealing with a number of themes: alienation, loneliness, the emptiness of fame, the awkwardness of love triangles, and on and on. Good stuff.

Adam says

If you're looking for the popular image of Bukowski--drunk, misogynist, taking swings at whatever gets close--you can find him here, including perhaps the quintessential Bukowski line in "40,000 flies":

"it's so easy to be a poet
and so hard to be
a man."

This is the slimmest volume of his poetry that I've picked up, and while it's not my favorite, it has some

gems. I've never been really disappointed by a book of Bukowski poetry.

Favorites in this collection:

"Leaning on wood," "The souls of dead animals," "The strangest thing," "2 flies," "The ladies of summer,"
"The night I was going to die," "The proud thin dying," "The killer smiles."

Downward says

tho he is still plagued with romanticizing a very particular kind of decadence and has real backwards ideas about gender, Bukowski the poet is I think much more talented than Bukowski the novelist. There's a real sense of cutting through the bullshit and honestly assessing life in these poems; he attacks the latter third of his life with the knowledge of the first 2/3rds, savoring the minor bacchanalias that sustain him while dismissing the bureaucracies that want to infringe of that life giving freedom. Bukowski is in many ways the poet laureate of the sticky floor and the rotten toothed. The poet laureate of gum and jaw cancer and gout and getting drunk and nasty. If that's your think, I kind of get it. It's not really mine.

Paul Secor says

Not everything works, but when Charles Bukowski nails one, it's down.

Bethany says

Many of these are timeless. A few have aged like milk. Reading Bukowski while female takes some patience.

Toni Rodriguez says

Después de ser un autor recomendado por varios conocidos fanáticos, tomé la decisión de leer Play the Piano Drunk. Es una obra interesante, pero supongo que habría impactado mucho más si lo hubiese leído en mis años de adolescente. Bueno como para leer más del autor, pero no logró encantarme. En algún momento podremos calificar con medias estrellas? Definitivamente es más que tres pero menos que cuatro

Gal says

Over hyped misogynistic old drunk writes about bacon, factories, whiskey, farts, whiskey, being drunk, drinking, strippers, whiskey, his dad, his mom, and women.

how he fucked women he loved

how he fucked women he didnt love

how he didn't fuck women he loved

and how he didn't fuck women he didnt love

and don't forget that everybody farts.

if you want to read entire 3 page poems for a good line maybe, or boring short stories then this is your guy.

If a person loves Bukowski for me it's a warning sign.

Laura says

Though it's a slim volume of poetry, this book makes up for its size by packing a huge punch of brilliance. The amazing poems more than outweigh the average poems. Before picking up this book, I'd only read a few of Bukowski's poems and his novel *Ham on Rye*. This has definitely encouraged me to read more of his poems. Today I bought *Love is a Dog From Hell*, which I'm very excited to begin!

I'd recommend *Play the Piano Drunk Like a Percussion Instrument Until the Fingers Begin to Bleed a Bit* to anyone who is interested in giving Bukowski a shot. Because of its small size, it won't matter if a person isn't a huge fan. They won't be out much time or effort. On the other hand, if the reader does enjoy his or herself, he or she will be immediately thirsting for a longer read.

Joe Totterdell says

Play the Piano Drunk Like a Percussion Instrument Until the Fingers Begin to Bleed a Bit is a short and sweet collection of poems published by Charles Bukowski in 1979 containing some of his most esoteric and least offensive poems (relatively speaking, of course, and as far as I have read of his work hitherto, which really says something about this collection)—some absolute gems in this collection.

"claws of paradise"

wooden butterfly
baking soda smile
sawdust fly---
I love my belly
and the liquor store man
calls me,
"Mr. Schlitz."
the cashiers at the race track
scream,
"THE POET KNOWS!"
when I cash my tickets.
the ladies
in and out of bed
say they love me
as I walk by with wet
white feet.

albatross with drunken eyes

Popeye's dirt-stained shorts
bedbugs of Paris,
I have cleared the barricades
have mastered the
automobile
the hangover
the tears
but I know
the final doom
like any schoolboy viewing
the cat being crushed
by passing traffic.

my skull has an inch and a
half crack right at the
dome.
most of my teeth are
in front. I get
dizzy spells in supermarkets
spit blood when I drink
whiskey
and become saddened to
the point of
grief
when I think of all the
good women I have known
who have
dissolved
vanished
over trivialities:
trips to Pasadena,
children's picnics,
toothpaste caps down
the drain.

there is nothing to do
but drink
play the horse
bet on the poem

as the young girls
become women
and the machineguns
point toward me
crouched
behind walls thinner
than eyelids.

there's no defense

**except all the errors
made.**

**meanwhile
I take showers
answer the phone
boil eggs
study motion and waste
and feel as good
as the next while
walking in the sun.**

Estermann Meyer says

" she got up and lit a cigarette, she was trembling all over. she paced up and down, wild and crazy. she had a small body. her arms were thin, very thin and when she screamed and started beating me I held her wrists and then I got it through the eyes: hatred, centuries deep and true. I was wrong and graceless and sick. all the things I had learned had been wasted. there was no living creature as foul as I and all my poems were false. "

vi macdonald says

I was genuinely hopeful for this one, "Play the Piano Drunk Like a Percussion Instrument Until the Fingers Begin to Bleed a Bit" is kind of an amazing title. Unfortunately the poems in this collection hardly even come close to measuring up to their title, which is a shame.

Basma says

No more Bukowski for me, ever.

Brian Sims says

Just read Play The Piano Drunk Like A Percussion Instrument Until The Fingers Begin To Bleed A Bit by Charles Bukowski - yes, that's the title.. It's a book of his poetry - not for all; not sappy poetry that is, more like drunken Sailor's stuff.. I thought it was right up the alley with the rest of his literature, though I like his novels much better..

Jess Beck says

Perhaps the style of writing was not for me, but I was disappointed by the poetry. Among the mediocre poems were some gems, though, and I feel it was still worth the gander.

Eric Cartier says

Some gems are scattered amongst the poems assembled here. I'm surprised the lesser ones appeared while Buk was still living and writing, though, because they're fit for the company of those minor poems that make up most of his posthumous collections. Nevertheless, when he's on, he shines. His basic observations, brazen line-breaks and black humor will probably lead me to read everything he wrote, in search of those jewels.

From *the proud thin dying*:

it's the order of things: each one
gets a taste of honey
then the knife.

Jake says

Bukowski the fiction writer and Bukowski the poet always seemed to be two different people. I've read a handful of his poems over the years and recognized a fire in him that is totally lacking from his novel work. In his poems, there lies a confident drunk, asleep at the wheel of life, seamlessly floating on by, content with distraction and apathy. In his fiction, there's an emptiness that's so passive, it's hardly a story at all.

This is the first volume of his poetry that I've read from start to finish and, at points, it was like reading poetry for the first time and realizing what the medium is capable of. Other times, it was like listening to someone's drunk grandfather repeat what he did yesterday in his sad life. Bukowski writes about the same thing many times over and he wants you to know that he drinks, fucks, gambles and doesn't care about any of it.

He never comes off as arrogant, which someone younger would maybe try. Instead, he lists his vices as a laundry list with no power to them, as if they're just there to keep him going. He's no tortured artist. He's just a man getting by, too tired to regret in large doses. He's one long shrug, spouting off some of the most true things you've ever known.

Some poems are just small things he observed, so small that you're mad that he wrote a poem about it. Other poems have a furious passion for living a shitty life and it's brilliant. It's really hit or miss, and it's that way in blocks. It'll be three poems in a row that make you think Bukowski was given the keys of life and then it'll be three poems of Bukowski wasting your time like an old drunk at a bar.

When he's good, he's goddamn glorious. When he's bad, he's miserable.

In life and in poetry.

Belinda says

Unsurprisingly, I am once again floored. I finished this book in less than a day and I felt like a 3 year old who just had her lollipop taken away when it was done. I literally felt pouty that it was over. This series of poems is from the 70's and is incredibly eloquent and harsh at the same time. Each thing I read of Bukowski's is like revealing another piece of an unbearably complex puzzle. Last night I had the house to myself and had set up my netflix so I could have the first in a series of Bukowski documentaries delivered. I watched "Bukowski: Born into This" and I found myself weeping at the end. I think probably everything has been said that could be said of this magnificent old lion. Poetry is incredibly personal to me--either it moves me or it does not. I can appreciate when it's quality even if it's not my style. The poets that truly move me become part of me in some way--as if we share a secret. Though in many ways Bukowski and I could not be more different, there are things that bump together that are so powerful that they overcome any differences. I am so thrilled that his body of work is so enormous. I can't wait to read it all and then start over and read it again.

Reese Lightning says

Not my style. I can appreciate his sparse, stark, raw & ragged style of composition, but I prefer my poetry more poetic, the language more lyrical. This just seems like unremarkable prose chopped into blunt little lines like cocaine. And that doesn't magically transform it into poetry, in my humble opinion. I know he's supposed to be one of the greats, but what exactly is the talent here? I don't see any insightful observation, innovative ideas, interesting rhythm or subject matter, or whatever other artistic merits one may throw at the wall to see what sticks.

Meredith says

I read this when I was like 14. I thought he was brilliant.... turns out, not so much
