



You Get So Alone at Times That it Just Makes Sense

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Charles Bukowski examines cats and his childhood in *You Get So Alone at Times*, a book of poetry that reveals his tender side. He delves into his youth to analyze its repercussions.

You Get So Alone at Times That it Just Makes Sense Details

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From Reader Review You Get So Alone at Times That it Just Makes Sense for online ebook

Taylor Quinn says

“there is a place in the heart that
will never be filled

a space

and even during the
best moments
and
the greatest times

we will know it

we will know it
more than
ever

there is a place in the heart that
will never be filled
and

we will wait
and
wait

in that space.”

Jim says

Bukowski, you miserable bastard, I found you on a shelf in a thrift shop. You would have found that appropriate, if it weren't for the fact that you were nestled beside a volume of Hemingway, whom you professed to scorn but I think you really envied his easy success, the profits that eluded you for so many years. Hemingway stayed on the shelf, but you came home with me so I could have a look to see what makes you tick.

At the time you penned most of the poems in this book you were about my age, and we are so alike in temperament that I found myself disliking you. Don't take it personally, but there can only be one misanthrope at a time in the room. I pay the mortgage, so you have to go. Leave the book.

Your poems at this stage lack the fire of youth, I'm seeing resignation and acceptance here. Some passages seem to convey a sense of dread:

*"as long as there are
human beings about
there is never going to be
any peace
for any individual
upon this earth(
or anywhere else
they might escape to).*

*all you can do
is maybe grab
ten lucky minutes
here
or maybe an hour
there.*

*something
is working toward you
right now, and
I mean you
and nobody but
you. (P196)*

I gotta admit, Charlie, that one gave me a little chill. But most of all, and very puzzling to me, is that your work seems to express a distaste for your fellow man paradoxically matched with a sense of loneliness. A case in point from Page 235:

escape

*the best part was
pulling down the
shades
stuffing the doorbell
with rags
putting the phone
in the
refrigerator
and going to bed
for 3 or 4
days.*

*and the next best
part
was
nobody ever
missed
me.*

I gotta say, Charles, that I usually don't finish a book of poetry so quickly. And I seldom like so much of

what I've read. Your book will never see another thrift store while I'm alive.

Cheryl says

You get so alone at times that it just makes sense to walk into a bookstore, flip through this book, take it to your table, buy a vanilla latte, and become immersed in words that seem simple, yet they have so much depth. It just makes sense to buy this collection, read it slowly, and spend a couple of weeks with verse arranged in such a way they pierce the everydayness. It just makes sense to spend some time with a poet like Bukowski, who is not afraid to write about the ordinary, flawed self:

sometimes when everything seems at
its worst
when all conspires
and gnaws
and the hours, days, weeks
years
seem wasted--
stretched there upon my bed
in the dark
looking upward at the ceiling
I get what many will consider an
obnoxious thought:
it's still nice to be
Bukowski.
(from "well, that's just the way it is...")

Sometimes it just makes sense to read poetry, so you see narrative appear in line format, so you read stories rearranged succinctly in poetic style. It just makes sense when words appear so simply, yet so poignantly:

there's nothing to
discuss
there's nothing to
remember
there's nothing to
forget

it's sad
and
it's not
sad
(from "the finest of the breed")

Bukowski was an alcoholic who had a tainted history with women, this is clear when you read this collection, and in some places it gets a bit repetitive. I was lured by the title of this collection and I really did

fall in love with the singularity of most of these poems. I'm just not in love with the collection, with the poems chosen to be pieced together (some poems could have been excluded). Call it an editing thing for me. But really, when it comes to style, the guy had it.

Some favorites:

"oh yes"

"for my ivy league friends"

"bumming with Jane"

"no help for that"

"downtown L.A."

"miracle"

"marching through georgia"

"beasts bounding through time"

Kerstin says

This is one of my favorite collections of poetry. Charles Bukowski led a pretty rough life (he was an unapologetic, womanizing, violent drunk) which is reflected in his work. Some of his pieces are coarse, lewd, and downright graphic. But amongst all of the chaos and drunkenness he will write something beautiful and poignant, which seems even more so in contrast to then violent and lascivious poems around it. And that's kind of what poetry is, isn't it? Finding something beautiful in the everyday. For whatever reason, this does it for me.

Dana Al-Basha ????? ?????? says

*"Some people never go crazy
What truly horrible lives they must lead
Boring damned people
All over the earth
propagating more boring damned people
What a horror show
The earth swarmed with them"*

*"Some lose all mind and become soul, insane.
some lose all soul and become mind, intellectual.
some lose both and become accepted"*

I added this book to my reading list because of the Beautiful Creatures "Lena & Ethan reading list".

Sohaib says

Imagine an old man (+45) with his four cats, living in a shabby one-room apartment with occasional girlfriends who come and go—that man is Charles Bukowski, otherwise known as the poet of the lowlifes.

Most poems are about drinking, getting wasted, writing, loneliness, failure, street fights, occasional hookups and poor living. Few poems get into the poet's childhood, especially his strained relationship with his father.

The style reflects such motifs. It's conversational and sometimes even vulgar—a smack in the face of anyone who thinks that poetry must be literary and refined. It's an upshot from modernism it seems to me.

I like Charles. He's a wild man.

Recommended.

Kathryn says

I think there is blood on my Bukowski book. Of course, the book is not mine. It is an ILL copy but I'm pretty sure the dried stains on the bottom right corners is blood. I wonder where the book has been. I've tried to not touch the area.

This is another excellent collection. Except for a few poems here and there that I did not react to, every one was memorable and true. I dread the day I run out of new-to-me Bukowski poetry.

Many of the writer's topics were the same, whores and other poets to name two, though the poems about other poets did not feel quite so antagonistic as in the last collection I read. I think Bukowski was feeling his own worth a bit more here. He sounded comfortable with himself and his life choices in many of the poems.

He also often mentioned his cats. I like knowing he was a cat person.

Road Rage was another noticeable topic, along with the Bomb, impending death, drinking with friends, drinking alone, life in L.A., digs at society and where society was headed (he was not off the mark in my opinion), and reflections of once being a starving artist. As the latest published collection I have so far read, there was a great deal more reflection going on and I liked it. As the title suggests, much of the writing felt lonely. But this was not always a bad loneliness. It is the loneliness of a person who conflicts with the world, who chooses to not change, who chooses to remain lonely.

I am able to relate to Bukowski more often than I like to admit, though I guess I am not alone in this fact, considering his success.

As usual, I ended with a book full of bits of paper sticking out, poems to not forget, poems more than worth mentioning.

When, at the end of *how is your heart*, Bukowski wrote "what matters most is how well you walk through

the fire", I felt it, more than when I have heard similar and more eloquent statements of the same. When I read *3 a.m. games*, I really wanted a cigarette. I enjoyed the longer story type poems, such as *a tragic meeting*, *I meet the famous poet*, and *whorehouse*, all of which I found rather funny for different reasons. *putrefaction* is another I simply want to mention because it has stuck with me.

invasion was my favorite. This is a first, as I have never been able to narrow the field so much, let alone to one. I would include the poem here but sadly it is too long and I think it is best left as a wonderful surprise for those who end up reading this collection.

Melody Manful says

Charles Bukowski is crazy, fortunately, I love crazy people.

Hahaha examines Cats. Personally, after reading this book, I find this man to be absolutely nuts. I could picture myself becoming friends with him, easily, because let's face it, I am as crazy as they come.

Stranger: Can you describe your friend Melody to me?

My Friends: Melody? That biatch is crazy with a capital K.

Me: Yes. Yes I am.

I will now review this piece how Bukowski would:

I wonder
between the two
of us
Bukowski and I
who is the
craziest
him for this book
or me
for calling
it a
masterpiece.
Either way
there's something
wrong with us
and so
is this
line.

See where I'm going with this? The difference between Bukowski and I though, is that, while he is a mad genius, I am... read more here

Melanie says

The question I put to every poem - do I believe your truth, do I enjoy your lies?

If both answers are a 'no' I'll consider them a stone cold sober waste of time.

But let's move on to 'alkies'. I always had a sneaking suspicion that despite the obvious and secret trials and tribulations of being an alcoholic, (high functioning or otherwise) alcoholics are out there having so much more fun than I and additionally gaining great material and inspiration for that book, poem, song, film project.

That's one of a myriad of excuses as to why I'm not being more creative - I'm simply not drunk enough. *For any goodreaders and alcoholics who elect to be offended, note my joking tone.*

According to some of the poems here 'alkies' are akin to sullen teenagers dropping 'whatever' bombs before that slam of the door.

There's a lot of too-cool-for-school shoulder shrugging, grunting, angst, road rage altercations and 'so it goes' kind of stuff that bores me a little - almond slivers of bravado going down sour.

A few poems snapped me out of the inertia: '1813-1883', 'beasts bounding...' 'hot', '...crippled saints' 'how is your heart?' 'it's ours'.

Back to truth and lies, the poetry is believable and real, but I wasn't inspired or entertained.

Fenia says

Bukowski is a genius. enough said. *.* ♥

Andy Carrington says

The book that re-defined poetry for me.

Buk was tough / a real inspiration.

M.L. says

Lots of people think that Bukowski's later work is less immediate and raw and powerful - after he found some commercial success (mainly in Europe) - than his earlier work. They ask "why don't you keep writing about drinking and fighting in alleys and sleeping with prostitutes?". To them, it felt more "real".

But I like the later stuff. It moves with more confidence and less self-awareness. I always got the sense that too many of his earlier experiences were experienced with exactly the self-satisfied knowledge that "at least

it will make for a good poem". The later stuff feels more immediate, to me, simply because it is less reflexively self-aware. Instead, I find the later poems more intentional, more reflexive, and less formulaic. Though understanding it well requires a reading of the earlier, meaner work - this is my favorite of the Bukowski poetry collections I've read so far.

Madeleine says

Man, I wish you guys could see how banged-up and dog-eared my copy of "You Get So Alone" is. I think that's the only way I can do this collection justice. The poet as an older man lacks the vinegar and vitriol of his younger self, but being eight years from his death certainly infused these poems with the magnetic appeal of a someone who has seen enough to write about it however he damn well pleases. His rage has abated and a brutally subtle wit stepped up to fill its shoes, all to an immensely successful result.

So it seems like I like Bukowski's poetry the best, but I think it's because of the vast range that a poetry collection lends itself to. This wasn't so much piss and beer and swearing as it was reflection and thoughts on writing and spurts of darkly humorous observation (and, yes, there still are homages to the race track, drunken nights and loose women to give it that brand of Buk's I-don't-know-what). The poems within YGSAATTIJMS showcase my absolute favorite thing about literature's dirtiest old man: his ability to blend crass honesty with delicate beauty, embracing the dualities of the human condition like few others can.

Edward Goetz says

I love the fact that Bukowski, even after winning fame, stayed so true to himself, and remained living where he always did: in the underbelly of society, a place few of us really know. It makes everything he writes so much more real; a perspective so many of us don't ever experience.

But for all that, his poetry still applies to so many of us, no matter where we live, or how much money we make. His wry observations on the modern world always ring true, making sure we always remember we all put our pants on one leg at a time.

Davy Cee says

The library is after me again to return this book to them. I just can't seem to let it go. I've taken to not answering my door in fear of an angry librarian come to collect on a raft of overdue fines. I think I might hide it inside my old toaster for a while just in case they break in and try to take it back.

Yes, it's that good.

And I'm a cheap bastard.

Jareed says

While the Beat Generation was making its headway in literature with the likes of *On the Road* and *Howl*, Bukowski was, in most instances, dead drunk. In the post-World War II lit movement where the Beat Generation found its threshold, Bukowski was engaged in what was to be a ten-year alcohol induced stupor predicated on his failure to initially break in the literary world. He actually wrote in a time after the Beat Generation, and this perhaps have brought contentions of whether he is actually a Beatnik himself. If the Beat Generation talks about bohemian hedonism advancing a firm denial of conformity through experimentation with drugs, repudiation of social constructs of gender and sexuality, negation of societal materialism, and most importantly, the depiction of human condition and emotion in its truest and most explicit state, then, this collection pretty much speaks for itself and saying that he really is part of the generation is not an unfounded conclusion.

In this collection, one will see that Bukowski is an honest man, a brutally honest man, whether that honesty is anchored on his drunkenness is something I have yet to read on. The topics are varied, from prostitutes, antagonistic views on other writers, drinking, horse racing, hurling invectives, daily life observations, his cats, loneliness, and did I mention drinking?

beasts bounding through time

Van Gogh writing his brother for paints
Hemingway testing his shotgun
Celine going broke as a doctor of medicine
the impossibility of being human
Villon expelled from Paris for being a thief
Faulkner drunk in the gutters of his town
the impossibility of being human
Burroughs killing his wife with a gun
Mailer stabbing his
the impossibility of being human
Maupassant going mad in a rowboat
Dostoevsky lined up against a wall to be shot
Crane off the back of a boat into the propeller
the impossibility
Sylvia with her head in the oven like a baked potato
Harry Crosby leaping into that Black Sun
Lorca murdered in the road by the Spanish troops
the impossibility
Artaud sitting on a madhouse bench
Chatterton drinking rat poison
Shakespeare a plagiarist
Beethoven with a horn stuck into his head against deafness
the impossibility the impossibility
Nietzsche gone totally mad
the impossibility of being human
all too human
this breathing

*in and out
out and in
these punks
these cowards
these champions
these mad dogs of glory
moving this little bit of light toward
us
impossibly.*

As the title would suggest, loneliness abound the poems, but underneath it, just beyond the listless landscape that define most of our lives, lives a triumphant man who seem to have come into terms with loneliness itself not by finding meaning in others but by remaining firm and steadfast, unyielding, choosing to live in loneliness itself.

how is your heart?

*...what matters most is
how well you
walk through the
fire.*

Indeed Bukowski, indeed!

Natalie says

This book makes me wonder if Charles Bukowski was the loneliest man on Earth. (Not as an insult)

I'll further explain my feelings towards this book with the texts exchanged between me and a friend (starting with me):

- "It's funny, the reason I can't just sit through a bukowski book and finish it at once is because he actually kinda starts to annoy me after a while... ha"
- "I can see that. But how so?"
- "It's too hard to explain in a text or even a few sentences, we'll just have to look at the book together sometime so I can explain. I still love him but if me and him were friends, we'd probably fight all the time just like he did with his girlfriends, except without being his girlfriend."

But you see, the point here really is, he obviously gets people talking about him, so I guess he wins. But I think I know a few reasons why. He is "brutally honest" most of the time, which most people are afraid of. He's not afraid of talking shit about anyone, including himself, and he'll tell stories of just about anyone he's had in his life. I think this is what makes readers feel like they're really in on something special, or feel some kind of connection with him. People are more easily drawn to other people who open themselves up and share things with you, and sometimes Bukowski's poems are more like a diary. Much of this book is a diary of the past. (There's a part of me that looks forward to being old and lonely and feeling comfortable writing whatever I want about practically anyone because most of them probably aren't in my life anymore... is that

bad?) Also, this book has both gems and crap, which is probably why he gets so many mixed reactions, and explains why he gets talked about so much. It's a matter of which ones you consider gems and which ones you consider crap. I think it's a bit much when people think every single poem is amazing and genius and incredibly insightful and truthful. Some of his poems really are just the result of a lonely, drunk old man bitching, perhaps with a tiny sprinkle of "I'm bitter and you should love me because I'm better than everyone else." The reason he's interesting is because he likes to blend the two - gems and crap - and often treats them as one in the same, and each reader has a different perception of which is which. The reason I still love him besides the many moments he annoys the crap out of me is because when he doesn't annoy me, there are plenty of other moments where I swear he could have been reading my mind and writing from my own heart.

Aad says

--beasts bounding through time--

Van Gogh writing his brother for paints
Hemingway testing his shotgun
Celine going broke as a doctor of medicine
the impossibility of being human
Villon expelled from Paris for being a thief
Faulkner drunk in the gutters of his town
the impossibility of being human
Burroughs killing his wife with a gun
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Nietzsche gone totally mad
the impossibility of being human
all too human
this breathing
in and out
out and in
these punks
these cowards
these champions

these mad dogs of glory

moving this little bit of light toward
us
impossibly.

Katie says

While I wasn't a fan of everything in this book, poems like "no help for that" and "it's ours" redeem it 100%

????? says

After reading this book I was inspired to write this poem:

the agony of this
existence
as if it weren't enough
of a struggle
just to wake up in the
morning and face the
sun

not for them
though
no
they need to make it
harder
a torment
hell
(they're obsessed with hell)
hell for others
while they
they
they live in privilege
they control
they enslave
they fuck
and they do it in the name of
righteousness
they hide behind their
prophet
they hide behind their
god

and they force

a papyrus to guide
them and us
us and them
they make it
tell them how to
live behave act
treat others
treat women
how to
be abusive
how to
be ignorant
and they
those assholes
those cowards
those elitists
they rule
us
