

Women. Coincidentally and yet not coincidentally the title of a Charles Bukowski novel and the main subject of this thesis. Charles Bukowski (1920 - 1994) was a German-born prolific American writer whose poetry and prose revolve about the underground life of Los Angeles. His characters were drunks, hustlers, prostitutes, losers, and social misfits. As inspiration he had countless dead-end factory jobs, love-hate relationships, or afternoons spent in the racetrack. After a hard day's work he cracked open a beer, put on a classical record, and began composing poems until his fingers "began to bleed" from typing or until the police came on account of the neighbors' complaint about his disturbing the peace. Bukowski's work in general is centered around the antithesis of the traditional American dream but to be more precise we should say that Bukowski was largely ignorant of the conventional way of living and the American go-getter ideal. Among the low class which became the most frequent subject of Bukowski's writing there is no such thing as daydreaming and the nights are too wild to be spent on dreaming either. There is simply no place for dreams in the lives of lower classes; there is only the rough reality of life at the bottom of everything. No wonder the author chose "Don't try" as his epitaph, often boasting that it was his lifelong philosophy. On the other hand, even the miseries and hardships of low life have no power over the primal need of human spirits to interact. And human interaction is the core of Bukowski's writing, that is, the relationship between man and woman. Apart from the calamities brought by excessive drinking, apart from the frustration with a neverending struggle for economic security, and apart from the infuriating disillusionment with the American nation, Bukowski devotes most of his verses and lines to the female.