

# Poetry Is Ordinary



Charles Bukowski brings comfort  
on the couch recovering  
from second miscarriage  
in a row, but let's talk  
instead about his poems:

the book  
is entirely about cats,  
every single poem about  
cats, soothing in its  
repetition, sometimes two  
or three poems about  
the same cat, same stories:  
why not? I write that way  
too, writing is just  
that way,  
recursively  
circling the scene  
of the same  
problematics  
tho always slightly  
different with each  
turn of the dial  
and I like it, I can identify  
with poems  
entirely about cats:  
cuz earlier

I got up trying  
to be normal again,  
to go back to work  
again as if nothing  
had happened but I  
couldn't and so  
I brushed my hair slowly  
(I had taken a shower)  
and blew it out with the dryer  
for once instead  
of letting it dry tangled  
and then when I had  
finally decided  
not to go  
again  
for the second day  
in a row  
and let fall still

all of my tilting at plans  
and deadlines and  
assumptions about how  
life should go  
and closed  
inverted malignant third eye  
of self-judgment

for once when I listened  
to silent roar of the body:  
just stop, just slow down  
that is when I went

and stood over  
my cat lying there  
on the bed and bent  
over her letting  
my hair fan like curtain  
or waterfall around where  
she slept on switched-off  
heating pad holding  
the memory of heat  
in the tiny mystery  
of her mind. And she  
tipped back her chin  
to lick at my forehead  
with the little poem of  
her tongue of pumice  
or sandstone

and then I went back  
to the couch to finish up  
Bukowski who I like  
because  
his poetry is about such  
ordinary things as these, just  
a cataloging of cats  
and other everyday  
objects and events, i.e.:

I get up and go outside and clap my  
hands and yell,  
"Beeker! Beeker!"  
come on, Beeker!"  
4 or 5 people in this working-class  
neighborhood curse me from under  
their sheets.

The first book of Bukowski I ever read,  
I was fifteen and it was one  
of his last before death:  
Last Night of the Earth Poems  
it was called, and in it  
he wrote about being  
old and sick and not knowing  
what to write about anymore  
and it seemed that  
the older he got  
the more unvarnished  
and conversational  
his poetry became,  
the more he revealed  
the luster and sanctity  
of the everyday: what else  
is there in the end?

That this way can  
become a poem too,  
I love it: my life,  
our lives  
are like that,  
are they not? Our lives  
are miscarriages  
and cats. And so too then  
our poems: I picture him

sitting at machine typing  
at night, drinking and  
swatting away cats  
from keys and writing  
poem after poem—  
and some are brilliant  
and some are basic  
but all of it helps  
because  
there really is no magic  
other than the ritual  
recounting of the multiplicity  
of things, tragic  
and beautiful both,  
bedazzling this

—Marisol Cortez  
*ordinary world.*

