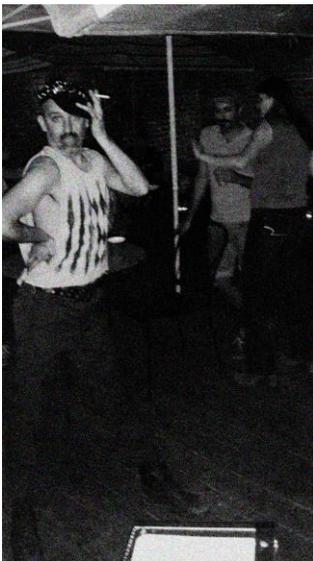


Directly From The Training Manual (1)

A good chance exists
the power will fail
and all the dripping
of water from the ceiling
will fill the shoes you bought
to work here,
and I'm sure you'll feel
at some point
you should be rewarded
for diligence
and not spat upon
by circumstance
but have you seen the folks
that come in this place?



A Network She Don't know

I'll have a gin and tonic.

He wore a scarf and specs
and there was "talk" around the bars
in text messages that *that* fucking queen
was back from South Carolina.

This time he cursed the place for not
showing CNN cover the tsunami.

Only music videos, he was told.

*Eight million people died in a hot second!
And you don't care!*

Even the straight bartenders said he was
made-up drama.

I'll just go somewhere else!

There really isn't anywhere here, Sally,
you can go.

Old Timer

Do me a favor,
tell that little faggot behind the bar
to get me another one of these
when he takes a break
from twirling around back there
like he's worth a shit or gonna make money
ignoring me, I know everybody who's worked here
or will work here, don't you know who I am,
I drove from Metarie
yeah
all the way here just to get another one of these
and listen, Nancy, I did my part
to get here just for this sorry lot of queers
nursing drinks all quiet in the dark,
I tell ya, there are too many twinkie skinny types out now
not like the old days when real men
didn't need you to buy 'em a drink for some play,
now it's boys on their Grinders and Facebookings
acting like they deserve something,
ya heard me,
get that faggot to stop dancing
and pay attention, I coulda stayed at home
with my wife for this.

Charades

First sign the Quarter was making me heartless
was after I got past all the toughness,
I was nice a long while and then I got scared
walking home at night
and making it there in one piece
just to come to work and find out
one of my staff was sliced up from knives
and coming in late.
Way after that, I was established as someone
and people knew my name, got waved to often
when I bought groceries in the morning, that whole thing,
I was heading in one early evening,
some poor bastard was flat out on his back
while tourists took pictures of him and laughed,
I stepped over the kid and kept on for a block
before I realized I was different than before New Orleans,
had less of that old love,
so I went back and gave him my hand,
said Man, somebody's gonna take your phone
and you might end up in jail,
maybe lose your money, maybe more,
the kid said I'm fine, I can find my hotel,
it's on Canal Street
and then he pointed to the heavens
like that was where he belonged,
I said Take my arm, I'll show you.

Blood In The Bed, After

thought it was a dream/just a vision/when I came to it was/as I suspected/leaves and limbs gone ape shit
out the window/my reflection between skin/glass/wind and all those police sirens I could taste/a sure sign
we were all breathing/grandmother air from between lips onto abrasions/a little spit came out/wet
warnings of what not to do when drunk/like run

I Miss You Means Fuck You For Leaving

No wonder we never see you around anymore.
I couldn't tell you the last time I was under trees,
in the fall, leaves coming down over my shoulder.
Get too afraid I'd lose an eye if I turned toward the sun,
man, it's like skin cells from the world
shaking off limbs like in a bath,
can't say I like the Quarter better, but really,
where else does someone like me go?
The breeze is here, too, it's just meaner
off the bricks, pulls everything from the ground
like band-aids and mashed birds and semen and blood
and spit and broken glass, liquor from the guts of plastic cups
you used to see all the time, not like now,
too "busy" to condescend and come down
and grace us with your presence,
too good to darken a door or vomit in a trashcan anymore.
I'm sure you do it in private uptown 'cuz it's more noble,
you've got money now,
a classy lady with purpose
or a real life I never hear you mention when you pull up a seat
and say how much you miss this smell.

Can You Stay For One More

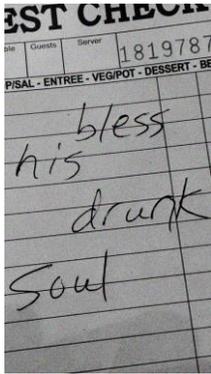
Security had to break down his door,
they said it was some sort of erotic asphyxiation,
no joke,
and this is the craziest part,
he had a baseball bat in his ass, really,
the thick end,
it kills me that people die hiding their kicks,
I'm surprised it's not in the news,
it was in a high-end hotel right across the street.

Veteran Speaks

Don't turn and look now,
but that queen in your section's been
cryin' her eyes out for an hour,
what,
yeah she does that every time she's here,
look,
let her drink all she fuckin' wants to,
ok,
that's her hag to her left,
they're both lawyers and hate the world
but somethin' tells me they either hate being home alone
or it's a real pleasure to cry on each other in public
then drop that black AMEX,
I mean,
it's none of my business
and who the hell knows,
be nearby at all times for that shit,
stupid as they are
they have money and know how to spend it,
what,
yeah it's just Absolut
but make 'em feel good, dickhead,
tell 'em they belong.

Text Message

I'm piece of shit no one will ever love me.
I'm old and fat just wish I had
someone like you to be better than friend



Directly From the Training Manual (2)

Look, to be completely honest
I'm over this fucking place,
have been a long time and if you make it
past three years, bravo queen,
you're as big a fucking lunatic as me,
I'm moving out of state and staying gone,
got a man who loves me in spite of all this,
look around, what's your legacy gonna be one day,
pride in yourself you survived a shift
without one of these old guys stuffing their jeans
and rubbing it against your leg
while you pass through for ice,
or you wanna tell your grandkids you figured out
how with great skill you could avoid
when the oldies find a way to get their tongues
in your mouth when you lean over to do
that friendly kiss, you don't know what I mean yet,
but watch out, those fuckers are patient,
fast, and once they get you no napkin or tequila shot
can rinse away that shame.

Loner Haiku
(String 1)

