

## Smog Cutter

John Flynn

Pio Pico, Bear Flag revolt, William B. Ide  
forget it, man, you never heard of 'em  
this is Hollywoodland  
where history for folks like you  
gets a celluloid virus and disappears.  
I drink here in the Smog Cutter on Virgil  
because I can. Nobody bothers a scribe in such a hole.  
You heard about Chandler and Bukowski, of course  
but lemme tell you about Hotel Nonnandie  
not far from here on the fringe of Korea Town  
where Malcolm Lowry stayed sober long enough  
to draft out of his spleen the massive throb  
that became *Under The Volcano*.  
Since Lowry was British  
it's safe to assume you my Angelino screenwriter pal  
never heard of his like or read his work.  
If I mention the movie version, Albert Finney, John Huston  
you'd say Yeah Yeah I saw that one on video  
it's old-school, man, yesterday's news, all changed.

So it has, and so it will,  
what's the point of capturing it, then?

I'd like to say leave me alone to die,  
be glad to be rid of me  
so my ghost can drive the surface streets  
remembering why I chose to live here,  
passing Jumbo's Clown Room  
where David Lynch liked to drink,  
where Courtney Cox danced for rips,  
where the bartender is usually a tattooed praying mantis  
who reads Philip K. Dick while pouring your draft.

Of course, my ghost won't suck down beers in this town.  
They'd make him look swollen.  
Ghost can't be nothing less than camera ready.

**KIRK DOLPHY AND CONSTANT PRACTICE**

took decades in a wood-shed out back  
for your reed to soften  
to sugar quiet effrontery,  
inward turns among faces  
to find private derangements a moment  
crimson in this night's lounge—

the next night a change in octave,  
a blood-orange solo all these  
balled-up avenue trains are you perfect when born  
and still getting there

hard bop to fathom  
dares and argue-cores embraces,  
erasures, eclipses and arabesques  
shared Arcadian anything-funk light  
-you, brother, working those fingers

each trill and its beyond  
filigreed vagrant a scoop through shallows  
each nuanced portrait that says all is transient  
defiance scars, rumors serious about open laughter  
pleasure for those who claim your every pause  
battered by their own devices

they turn as you turned to Kirk and Dolphy  
seek artistry without logic and a lunacy  
cacophonous conniving convictions  
that say it's worth it  
to keep going...despite no seer, no seen  
no tempest to claim so  
many shades of sin