

to Jane Cooney Baker, died 1-22-62
by Charles Bukowski

and so you have gone
leaving me here
in a room with a torn shade
and *Siegfried's Idyll* playing on a small red radio.

and you left so quickly
as suddenly as you had arrived
and as I wiped your face and lips
you opened the largest eyes I have yet to see
and said, "I might have known
it would be you,"
and you did recognize me
but not for long
and an old man of white thin legs
in the next bed
said, "I don't want to die,"
and your blood came again
and I held it in the pail of my hands,
all that was left
of the nights, and the days too,
and the old man was still alive
but you were not
we are not.

and you went as you arrived,
you left me quickly,
you had left me so many times before
when I thought it would destroy me
but it did not
and you always returned.

now I have turned off the red radio
and somebody in the next apartment slams a door.
the indictment is final: I will not find you on the street
nor will the phone ring, and each moment will not
let me be in peace.

it is not enough that there are many deaths
and that this is not the first;
it is not enough that I may live many more days,
even perhaps, more years.

it is not enough.
the phone is like a dead animal that will
not speak. and when it speaks again it will
always be the wrong voice now.

I have waited before and you have always walked in through
the door. now you must wait for me.