



Photograph by Hugh Findlay. Illustration by Stacy Reece.

FRANK O'HARA GETS DIRTY IN BULL CITY

IMAGINE YOU PLOPPED A CRAZY
1950S NEW YORK SCHOOL POET
DOWN INTO A 21ST CENTURY
SATURDAY NIGHT IN DURHAM.
IT'D BE DIRTY, YOU KNOW, IN
THAT GOOD WAY.

By Hugh Findlay
Mar 16, 2023

how *dirty* you taste today Durham!
like Kevin Costner in anything he's always the same anyway
just like you underlying everything no matter the eclectic dirties
who crowd your breweries and klatches down on 9th street
where the crusty anti-bourgie shop owners grouse about the poseurs on the sidewalk
or when the parking rates go up or even if it rains which makes things dirtier
they just don't bullhorn it so they can say they are so relaxed
so they can flow South forever like the Carolina Zephyr past Sam's Blue Light 44 years
running

let's go then to the generational fruit salad Saturday morning at the farmers market
where mixing is the point cuz without it nobody would go
or smoke the short fat black vapes that are just loud enough to make a statement
while wearing rainbow Rasta beanies and Bluetooth ear buds
where the family dogs and tie-dyed kids swirl around like a vodka and Campari
and new mothers show off their new babies and new boobs and new world view

next street over at the food truck rodeo we grab an Only Burger topped with egg and
gruyere
and green salsa I swear it's totally amazing but also bloats you so we head back
Jonesin' then to the low density downtown apartment condo with pool and gym privileges
fenced in of course — brownstone! — that keep out the gentrified street trash and gang
bangers
half a blunt and a 4:20 nap then Uber to the ballpark
either for Duke v Navy or the Bulls against anybody
doesn't matter it's all overcast afternoon lollygagging anyway
and damn cheap when you think about it
not like a hockey game which to your bank account is like a hickey on Sunday morning
and after that that new rooftop bar is too crowded but Alley 26 is always dependable
and everyone drinks this week's best dirty (*neat*) bourbon ever! until
the foul subject of basketball comes up and you better crash before you fight again or
purge

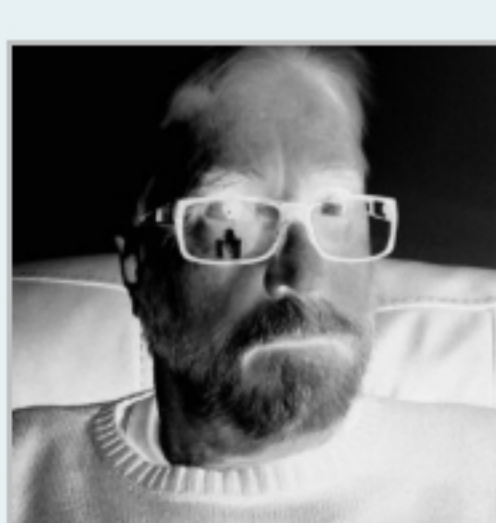
so we go all chicken-and-waffles at Elmo's for breakfast and
afterward there's wi-fi and coffee down at Cocoa's with DeMarcus and Taylor
he's so sweet but won't come out
I don't know what he's waiting for maybe it's the Prince Albert
and you know *she* can be rough as a cob even with her marvelous *au natural* tan
but you can't choose your roommates sometimes
I wonder if they hook up sometimes?
I wonder if she'd hook me up sometime?
I don't know I can't even seem to choose my friends anymore I always accept requests
the rush just jacks me up and I need the bump after nights of being out there
it's kinda like work it really is

now around the corner we can ease into Motorco or the Blue Note
and maybe catch Ben Folds or Phonte working out something dope
but we opt for Fullsteam brewhouse and have a Cackalacky or
pumpkin IPA with all the dirties there in jammy pants and t-shirts
with arcane emblemania (*all your base are belong to us!*) and half-dollar gages
and damn gorgeous colored ink past elbows and necklines with
white boys in dreads talking Linux and wedge-heeled Latinas throwing shade on
black dudes face-sucking they white girlfriends
and lesbians hanging till it's just not dirty enough and they wander back to The Bar
where they can use any bathroom they want
so I have to jack it back and chill a sec and then
just to take inventory and get a filthy thick flavor
I count 29 iPhones and 58 eyeballs all lapping up the love of
mister nobody on Zantac and mint mocha lattes
sweet bull city it's so dirty to be alive!
they ain't got shit in Chapel Hill

SHARE



About The Author



Hugh Findlay

Hugh Findlay lives in Durham, North Carolina, and would rather be caught fishing. He drives a little red MG, throws darts on Tuesdays, reads and writes a lot, dabbles in photography and makes a pretty good gumbo.

LEAVE A COMMENT

You must be [logged in](#) to post a comment.

Legal

[TERMS & PRIVACY POLICY](#)

Subscribe

EMAIL



Social

[INSTAGRAM](#)
[FACEBOOK](#)
[X](#)
[THREADS](#)
[YOUTUBE](#)
[TIKTOK](#)