So You Want To Be A Writer

by Charles Bukowski

if it doesn't come bursting out of you

in spite of everything,

don't do it.

unless it comes unasked out of your

heart and your mind and your mouth

and your gut,

don't do it.

if you have to sit for hours

staring at your computer screen

or hunched over your

typewriter

searching for words,

don't do it.

if you're doing it for money or

fame,

don't do it.

if you're doing it because you want

women in your bed,

don't do it.

if you have to sit there and

rewrite it again and again,

don't do it.

if it's hard work just thinking about doing it,

don't do it.

if you're trying to write like somebody

else,

forget about it.

if you have to wait for it to roar out of

you,

then wait patiently.

if it never does roar out of you,

do something else.

if you first have to read it to your wife

or your girlfriend or your boyfriend

or your parents or to anybody at all,

you're not ready.

don't be like so many writers,

don't be like so many thousands of

people who call themselves writers,

don't be dull and boring and

pretentious, don't be consumed with self-

love.

the libraries of the world have

yawned themselves to

sleep

over your kind.

don't add to that.

don't do it.

unless it comes out of

your soul like a rocket,

unless being still would

drive you to madness or

suicide or murder,

don't do it.

unless the sun inside you is

burning your gut,

don't do it.

when it is truly time,

and if you have been chosen,

it will do it by

itself and it will keep on doing it

until you die or it dies in you.

there is no other way.

and there never was.