

# DISTRACTIONS

## Don't Ask Me Why: Ask Why (be young have fun drink poison)

The smell of alcohol is choking me. It's surrounding me. And it's poison is on a killing spree again tonight. And its victims don't know it tonight. The perfect murder. Dancing on the strings, strings of addiction, pulled by "our" so-called government. Yeah, power to the people, what a fucking joke! Don't tell me about freedom, or "it's my life", because I've heard it too many times. And I wonder if you even know what the your saying. "My life", your pitiful so-called "life" is only a means to an end, your end, and you'll drag others down. Can you call that life when it destroys what you say it is, I don't think so. This is about truth. Unseen, unspoken words about truth. Not a debate, not a premise, or argument. These are the facts, this is the solid truth. And any words against a drug free life are only cover words saying "i'm pro death", incognito. Unwillingly playing out genocide on ourselves, but they'll call it fun, say carpe diem. I'll say hypocrite, I'll say liar. And the families of the innocent killed by your second hand murder will call you to the stand. And your frivolous gods will convict you for raping the greatest creation,

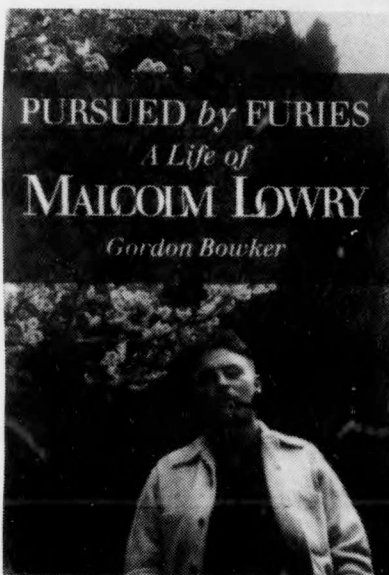
the human mind. "Welcome to the goddamn terrordome!" Welcome to the justice system which seems to overlook 100,000 plus dead every year. Just as long as you feed their fire, it's no problem. And everything in the drug world is artificial, false happiness, false courage, false fun, false love. I guess life alone is no longer enough. The greatest experience, yet, it's not enough any more. And in the quest to enhance life, it's slaughtered. A life full of colours, and sounds, and tastes, and sights. Some want more, and they're not gonna find it! Taking their drugs, going on "trips", which, evidently, implies the action of falling down, these "trips" on some quest for some philosophical absolute knowledge of life, while ending one with every puff further into eternal damnation. Hypocrisy, again. Tripping out, and asking all the unanswered questions, when the answers they seek won't help us now. What people need to do is stop looking to the heavens, and stop drinking their problems away, when it's all rooted in money. What will answers give us, knowledge? Even though it's your bible that tells us, repeat-

edly, that the greatest knowledge is not to be attained, and if so, it will end in your demise. Stop ignoring the real problems, and the body counts your senseless consumption send racing to infinity. You want to get "high"? Well why don't you try getting sober, and doing something to help others. One hundred percent natural goal attainment reached through caring for the distress. This is not about some self-righteous holier than thou attitude, because I'd gladly take all your drugs, and drink all the poison if it'd all be over. I'd exchange my love to die the embarrassment of human kind so everyone else could live drug free forever... live in peace. This is a plea for consciousness! Integrity, innocence, life, love, truth, honesty, perseverance, reason, will passion... What did these words ever mean? Were they written just to be broken, like they say it is with rules? As frail and fragile as I may seem, not yet tested in the unceremonious rituals of transformations from youth to adult. I am secure, and wrapped tight in a blanket of purity and wisdom which seems to filter the strength of my beliefs as your followers frivolous

attempts to cut me down and chalk me up as another one of your grovelling victims continuously fail. The walls I have built can only be built higher. And once the masses have found this truth there will be no escape, there will be no need to. You will fall, and there will no longer be two sides on an issue that should clearly be one sided! So what will we have left with the whole world stoned, like an ancient stoning, we'll bleed! And what will remain if we all walked in step with the drunken stupor of a fool? Or if we create global conformity through the ever popular "social habit" of smoking? It'll be a short lived existence, and eternity as we know it will be spent in hell! "It's for life!" "A life controlled by poison is no life at all!" "True till death!" "Words to live by, words to die for!" "It's not a fashion statement, and it's not a joke any longer!" Please!



## Who Killed Malcolm Lowry?



*Pursued By Furies: A Life Of Malcolm Lowry*  
by Gordon Bowker  
Random House, 1993, 672 pp.

The four things that an English major is likely to know about Malcolm Lowry is that he 1) wrote one certified masterpiece, the novel *Under the Volcano* 2) lived in Canada for a time 3) pretty well drank himself to death, but 4) finally opted for suicide, age 47. It is hard to fathom these contradictions in one man, but there they are.

In this biography which promises to be definitive (=of door-stopper proportions), Gordon Bowker attempts to solve the mystery of the man. The great question is, why did a someone as obviously gifted as Lowry elect to lead a life commensurately miserable and self-destructive?

For lack of space, let's return to point #3. To say that Malcolm Lowry was alcoholic is to speak of the Empire State Building being tall. Lowry was a prodigious drunk most of his life, who virtually claimed alcohol as his muse. His novel *Under the Volcano* is all about—you guessed it—a man drinking himself to death who finally gets his death-wish granted.

On the inside dust jacket there's a quote from Lowry justifying his *modus operandi*: "I see no reason why one should not be led down the drain; I believe it an important experience if the drain is fulsome enough."

I love endings, and in Lowry's case it's just as well. Let's skip to the last

chapter, strangely titled "Going Down Fighting." Can you guess one little addiction Lowry has not particularly been fighting? Just so! Ten years after the triumphant publication of *Volcano*, Lowry has published nothing else. He is living in a small seaside village in England with his second wife, Margerie, who is something of a case herself. To say they've been having their troubles is to speak of strained relations between Rome and Carthage.

Let us retrace the events of Lowry's last night on earth, 27 June 1957. Lowry has been—surprise!—drinking heavily. So, too, has Margerie. It is she who smashes the near empty gin bottle against the bedroom wall, but Lowry who runs after her with the jagged business end of it. Margerie decamps to a neighbor's, as she has done times before.

When she returns the next morning, Lowry is dead and her bottle of sleeping pills is empty. All things considered, it is a fitting and fulsome end to a life gone down the drain.

Bowker cannot leave it at that but instead hints darkly—and because he does no more than hint, cravenly—that Margerie, with Goneril-like perfidy, persuaded Lowry to down her sleeping pills in the belief they were vitamins. This would not be my first course of action if a violent dipsomaniac were lunging after me with a broken bottle, but who can say? Whatever the truth of Lowry's end, the circumstances were sordid and silly enough.

Bowker's epitaph on Lowry is simply that he was "a good man fatally flawed." What that flaw is we're left to guess at, but, as per the biography's title, we are encouraged to think of Lowry as a tragic hero, a man pursued by furies, whose plight might indeed provoke pity and terror.

Come on. If Lowry hadn't drunk as he did, perhaps his furies wouldn't have pursued him so ah, furiously. This is stating the obvious, of course, but over 600-some pages, Bowker never quite states it himself. No one else killed Malcolm Lowry but Malcolm Lowry, and his long-time accomplice was alcohol.

One can almost marvel at the dex-

trous ways in which Bowker evades the consequences of Lowry's drinking. The man hadn't published anything for *ten years*. The reason given is that "he was too easily diverted by private terrors, accidents, and grandiose projects." Nothing he wrote afterward, most of which was published posthumously, approaches the stature of *Volcano*. This, too, according to Bowker, was his wife's doing: "his relatively stable[!] marriage robbed himself of the kinds of crises which underlay the earlier greater work." Alas for happily married artists!

The simple truth is that Lowry's elixir of life had turned into brain-rotting poison and he was unwilling or unable to give it up. The closest Bowker comes to admitting as much is to paraphrase[?] a conversation Lowry had with a concerned physician: "He said his attitude to alcohol had certainly changed and he now saw it as a menace rather than a joke, but said there must be a middle way of moderation for him. If there was not, his life would simply not be worth living."

Lowry never found that middle way. Alcoholics can't: that's why they're called alcoholics. Lowry knew he couldn't live with liquor and he didn't want to live without it. So much for looking for self-murder motives. The only mystery is how Bowker manages to overlook this central fact of Lowry's life.

Even in the epilogue, after Lowry has disappeared down the drain with a mighty slurping sound, we're treated to the usual blather about tortured genius and artistic self-affliction: Lowry "believed in the necessity of descending to hell and returning in order to testify in great art."

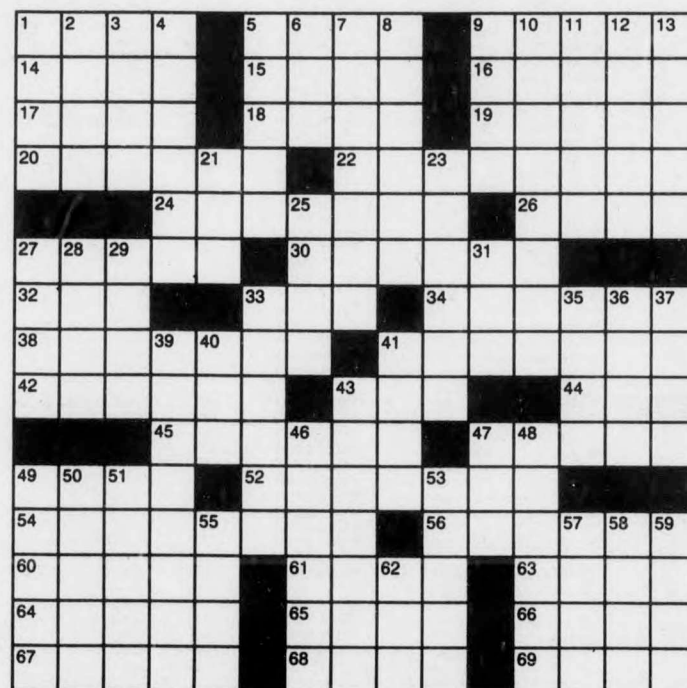
The problem with Lowry is that he stopped returning.

Whether it's worth going to hell for a Penguin Modern Classic is another question understandably sidestepped by Bowker.

For the rest of us, if nothing else, this book offers dire if indirect warning: Drink too much for too long and this could happen to you!

Sans masterpiece, of course.

- David Deaton



- Across
- Lump of dirt
  - Fly high
  - Dine at home
  - Have being
  - Mystery aid
  - Apathetic
  - Skater Heiden
  - Repose
  - The Good Book
  - Hat
  - Like a fez
  - Bad conduct mark
  - Elliot \_\_\_\_\_
  - Used a lariat
  - Mexican-party flavor
  - Likable guy?
  - Spy gp.
  - System of measures
  - Extreme
  - Below
  - Ringed planet
  - Actor Heffin
  - Herbal drink
  - Strainers
  - Swarms
  - Ginger Cookie
  - Law Officer
  - Accepting
  - Rubs out
  - Do penance
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a dozen
  - Doorman's call
  - On edge
  - Grew older
  - Mild expletive
  - Did yard work
  - Land parcels
  - English title

- Down
- Musical sign
  - Italian currency
  - Roman poet
  - Solve a cryptogram
  - Go away!
  - Hurrah, in Madrid
  - Vienna's country
  - Hold
  - Wanes
  - Make unfriendly
  - Dining surface
  - British \_\_\_\_\_
  - Requirements
  - VIP carpet color
  - Plant part
  - Poem
  - Disposes of
  - Edible pods
  - Bog fuel
  - Twice five
  - Motion picture
  - Evaluate
  - Gossip bit
  - Cartoonist Addams
  - Hitchcock's mastery
  - Three: pref.
  - Angler's catch
  - Dizziness
  - Ruffian
  - Sailor
  - On cloud nine
  - Florida or Kansas
  - Well-known
  - Next to
  - Minds
  - Hollow stem
  - Heroic story
  - SAT, for one
  - Lateral
  - Came upon