

**>>> "YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE" <<<
(A NONFICTION PASS TO "YOU KNOW HOW YOU ARE")**

I like coffee, with a spike of milk.
I scout for good bars and barflies, dig the street lingo.
Sometimes I commit it all to memory, like a prayer.
Sometimes I'm lazy and don't remember jack.
Sometimes I'm wise and text a few notes on my dumb-phone,
still there at the bar: don't wanna lose that live feeling.
No-one thinks you're writing, when you punch an old cell.
Then I get back home and write down what I saw, heard, felt.

This whole process bred a daily (mostly) journal.
It is longhand. It is pen on paper. It is not my native tongue.
Not, because it allows for: truer, closer, deeper cuts.
The Voice of Conscience? Maybe.

The process began one October afternoon.
Sometimes I had fun, sometimes not, yet I carried on.
One and a half years of that. Bar after bar after bar.
Sometimes I mailed scans of my journal to a friend.
Sometimes I had replies, sometimes not, yet I carried on.
One bar a day, sometimes even three: what the hell,
it's coffee, 80 cents each and no big deal (and real exercise).
I think I am my own specimen.
Is it fun? Yes. And no. Educational? Always.
Plus I think I'm at least three times lucky.

One, I went to the Chinese spot across from StripTease.
It bred half of my story.
Luck number two was the X-factor.
Dumping or being dumped by girls, by bosses, friends...
It is commonplace. It happens to everybody.

And it's a lot like editing.

You X- and are being X-ed out. Makes for a good metaphor.

Which is what bred the missing half of my story.

It provided a lost-love memory, plus childhood memories,

plus an unfinished draft of an unfinished narrative...

some more Voice of Conscience provided the encores.

But I like coffee, with a spike of milk.

So I dug the journal back: I picked the Chinese spot

entry out, another about neons at night, dumped the rest

and glued the two narratives into the main storyline.

Then I got a "write what matters to you" pitch.

It was for this anthology, made me three times lucky.

This is how it went.

Bar after bar after bar. You know where you are.

One day we'll look back on this and it'll all seem funny.