

Blantons Bourbon:

She leaned forward and pulled, sucked my last cigarette from the pack crushed by the road. She looked up like I was the inbred coupling of morons as I fumbled for a match. The one time my wind chapped and sunburned skin came as a relief as I ripped the match across my tattoo of mom's skull and let her pull my lit hand to her nail. Never have I understood when they say a woman's lips were fire until I saw the lit end of that cigarette match her lipstick blowing smoke in my face. Any words of wisdom I had were gone with the smoky exhale of her cheap whiskey and fresh ash breathe, "You could use a better drink."

"I was only here to see if you smoked a menthol like every other ex-con drifter coming through town," leading me back to the bar with a twin arc of tossed smokes.

She was a classy dame and I wasn't gonna get to rough-up the silk on her loins without a good game. I tossed the bartender an "I could give a rats ass if you wanna deal with the trash first look," holding a hundred onto the bar. My bait was noticed and I snagged a fat bass of a bartender. "Two Blantons." I knew the dame would be fond of her foreign brandies or armagnac that the average Joe couldn't pronounce but I wanted to light a fire with this one. The bartender set the Blantons in front of us with awe and respect as I slipped the bone off the hidden tenner so I got two slightly smokey yet delicately balanced bourbons along with the change for a hundred just in case the lady was a tramp without taste or class. But one sip of the cool, rough-tinged bourbon brought her back to riding horses through sage brush and succulent crotches tinged with saddle-leather. It was what she needed to knock the dust off my boots and check that my long wayward mother had foreseen putting my name in my underwear in case it was tossed somewhere on the range under a naked moonlit ride.

Blantons Bourbon; It's where the ride takes you.

Catskill Bourbon

The night's a cacophony of cooling breezes shaking the pine tree tamborines, cicadas chirping rhythm against the bass line of the stream as my single ice cube (oh, so precious ice cube in the woods) sings a gentle tune clinking on the sea of Catskill Whiskey. It's the zen moment of calm that city slicks hike deep in the woods to find. I lift the glass to marry the moment in my mouth when an objection clanged with my pan on the dying embers of the fire. Damn bears can't ruin my zen, "Kid, get on the table and wave a flashlight over your head if this bear isn't alone." "Where are you going?...Mommy don't chase the bear... Mommy you don't have pants."

Ripping through berry bushes, chasing a bear down the river so scared that he shat, I found my way lost in the woods. Only the sound of the river guided me back to camp where the kid had poured a healthy dose of calm-the-fuck-down Grizzly Adams sized shot of Catskill Bourbon whiskey back in my tin cup still smokey from the firetop cowboy coffee. "You're not supposed to chase bears, Mommy." "Tell that to your dad."

I took a deep long snout-full of the proffered cup. Someone's rich cigar half a mile away, the smell of the stream drying off a tired husky, hints of iron from bush scratched legs and something definitely gamey yet brambly fruit scented with hints of bacon-- the bear scat I'd slipped in. I took a long pull of Catskill Bourbon. "Sometimes the right bourbon makes you do the wrong things when they need to be done." Like comparing a bourbon to bear scat, in a good way.

Catskill Bourbon: Tonight it'll be right.

Balcones Texas Brimstone Whisky

She was stretched along her expensive leather couch that somehow managed to catch the memory of your first MG midget you and your buddies spent two years rehabbing in anticipation of actually being old enough to drive. Her leather satchel spilled the days caseload across her antique Han dynasty mahogany table that you didn't know was an actual wood let alone the part about being more than just a cheap chinese take-out. Toss the keys on her skirt slowly inching over her knees. "Purrs like a kitten. No problem bringing it by for you."

She swayed her feet to the floor, let the keys of a 200K car hit the floor and scuttle under the couch, tapped lightly while filling a glass of wine along with hers. I settled in next to her while she reached for the remote, clicking to The Bachelor as it was just getting started. "It's a bad habit." Eh, I'll drink your polly pussy wine or whatever this frog piss is. Reading my thoughts, "I'd prefer bourbon also, but I left my Balcones in the bedroom." The Bachelor, white wine, and the smell of leather deep in my snout? "Are you fucking kidding me?" picking her up, ramming her through the living room wall (McMansions are built so shittily) landing head deep inside her leather skirt with her musky South-of-the-border muff already slicking my face so fast I was ready to be inserted body and soul inside her. The leather, the spice of her chile laden diet. She ripped the rest of her shirt off that wasn't hanging from the hole in the wall. I reached out, found the bottle and poured some down my gullet and more all over her body. Not a drop was lost between our mouths.

Balcone Whiskey from Texas: Who the fuck watches The Bachelor anyway.

Old Grandad

I stole a bottle on my way out the door, never looking back on the black-dressed crowd. My last conversation with the corpse running like shaky fingers through my hair, "The only thing I want from you is the rest of the bottle that kills you." He laughs and calls me an asshole; a compliment on his deathbed weres .

A buddy picked me up. We scuttle to the beach where I try to sink through the sand. I rush into the moonlight sliding behind a cloud only to get mercilessly slammed by a wave that didn't give a shit about my day. That's when I found that that last bottle of Old Grand Dad was rolled down into my reach. You could never finish anything that said we'd start and you couldn't start me help finish i could never finish anything like you finished how you're dead and i didn't stop this and you're dead and this last wave is my last because you're dead and so will I.

The wave didn't make it far enough to carry me away. I'm still here and you're gone.

I lifted the bottle of Old Grandad and poured it in. It hurt. It's a shitty bourbon but it smelled like my dad kissing me goodnight on a Sunday night with shellfish and saltwater on his breath trying to be masked by high alcohol perfume sold for Levis by the Russian boats waiting darkly in the port. It smelled of hope, as though Dad's whiskey breath could whisk me away from the ocean on an over-toasted raft to the Kentucky earthiness perfect in its spicy balance of me wanting to die and it's wanting to kill me. Yet, here I am without you.

Old Grand Dad: What doesn't kill you really should.

Gruber New Mexican Hatch Chile Spiced Whisky

Coupla guys on each side. Almost pulling off the pretend that we don't know each other after the stretch. All looking forward. Maybe there's a ride waiting to take me anywhere, maybe I'll hitch to nowhere. When the gate closes behind us and it's real, we actually laugh, smile hug like we ain't nobody's niggah no more. We're free men.

Kid's grown up without me. She's a person now. Personality, attitude (barrel-full of attitude) and a daddy she only knew through letters and hidden payments. She pulls up in a pretty nice car that wasn't part of the federal deal. Throws me shade...is that what they say now; it's been awhile. "Hey, you clean up well," Prison Etymology 101. "I'm not gonna wear my pants around my knees to show I've got cred."

We drive in silence. Then she pops a tune. "My band." It's actually decent; urban blue-grassy. "I just--" I raise a hand to cut her off. She puts a bottle in the hand. We kinda know each other. It's a local crap attempt at bourbon with spice and shitloads of hatch green chiles. "Figure I should help you flush whatever's been up your ass the last coupla years." Goddam kids raised without a father. I toast her and the long road. Roll down the window. It's a dusty, endless road we're driving whetted with a sweet pungency reminiscent of my toilet fermentations of anything sweet that spared my life on more than one occasion. The heavenly overwhelming spice of the green chiles cuts its way through the shit and wakes me up to a new day and justifies all the wrongs. The Kid doesn't hate me and the road is open. "Other than the 500 songs you sent me, get any time to practice during all that man-time?"

Gruber New Mexican Hatch Chile Spiced Whisky: You're the most wonderful pain in the ass I'll ever have.