

ENGL 3000  
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INTRODUCTION: WHAT NEEDS TO BE TALKED ABOUT?  
SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS & FEATURES IN C. BUKOWSKI'S "THE TRASH MEN"

(In class)

Let's begin with a short poem, "the trash men" by the American writer Charles Bukowski (1920-94). I'll read the poem then give you a few minutes to list at least *three* elements or features you think deserve *special attention* when considering the poem's meaning and effect. Then, I will ask each of you to tell the class *one* of features you identified.

Of course, we can't help but be interested in the poem's meaning; but our primary concern today is to identify the features we think shouldn't be overlooked in a serious examination of the poem.

Charles Bukowski, "the trash men" (1974)

here they come  
these guys  
gray truck  
radio playing

5 they are in a hurry

it's quite exciting:  
shirt open  
bellies hanging out

10 they run out the trash bins  
roll them out to the fork lift  
and then the truck grinds it upward  
with far too much sound . . .

they had to fill out application forms  
to get these jobs  
15 they are paying for homes and  
drive late model cars

they get drunk on Saturday night

now in the Los Angeles sunshine  
they run back and forth with their trash bins

20 all that trash goes somewhere

and they shout to each other

then they are all up in the truck  
driving west toward the sea

25 none of them know  
that I am alive

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