

The Strange Odyssey of Howard Pow!

Book review

Pun Plamondon

1969

a review of

The Strange Odyssey of Howard Pow! by Bill Hutton, Detroit Artists' Workshop Press, 1967. \$1.00.

"Ed Dream pushed the big barn doors open and the morning light poured in. The cow mooed. She was in her milking stall. The bull rubbed his horns against the slats of his pen and the goat was eating some straw. The chickens squawked and laid a few eggs. "Good morning, cow," sang Ed Dream, setting a bucket under the cow and pulling a milking stool up for himself. He jerked the cow's tail twice. "That's for good luck," he said. 'I've never milked a cow before.'

"Oh, brother, thought the cow, taking a deep breath and holding it. Now," said Ed Dream, 'I guess I just pull your tits like this...: 'No!' shouted the goat. The goat took off his head. It was Harry Truman. Harry Truman was wearing a goat costume. 'No, you won't milk that cow, Farmer Ed! Wha...? What's going on, Harry?' said the bull. 'What the hell did you take off your outfit for?' I can't just stand here and let this weirdo milk Bess. That's why, Bull.'

"Well...the cat's out, I guess," said the bull, looking at the TV audience and shrugging. He took his head off. It was Teddy Roosevelt. The cow was Warren G. Harding. The chickens and the pigs and the rest of the animals took off their heads. Thirty-eight ex-presidents of the U.S.A. use Gillette Blue Blades in their razors and swear to a clean shave!"

Bill Hutton wrote *The Strange Odyssey of Howard Pow!* It was published in Detroit by Artists' Workshop Press in 1967. The stories are the realities of America as seen through the eyes of a dope crazed maniac, something all of us can relate to.

"Is it true, Mr. President," asks a young reporter near the front, "that you are working on some TV commercials for Amerika?" "Yes it is. In one there's about 40 midgets laying on the beach down at Florida. Some of them are floating in patched innertubes out in the surf and there's a big sign on the beach saying, 'Even midgets feel at home in the U.S.A.'"

"But my favorite is the one with the little crippled boy. There's this little crippled boy out in the snow freezing to death. The Enemy comes up and starts pouring hot water on the boy. Then an American—Uncle Sam—appears, knocks the Enemy dead, picks up the boy and says, "I love you little freak child!"

Ha! Man, Hutton's a genius! These stories have got to be some of the funniest stuff around, it seems that at this stage in the revolution the only way we can relate to society "straight people" is to see them for what they really are and laugh, man, that's about all you can do.

"I said gimme some fuckin' cigars!" "I beg your pardon?" she said, her eyes poking out into the back of her glasses. "I said—with a deft well-practiced move, The Crank pulled out a rubber knife—"gimme some goddamned stogies and none a yer shit, understand? Her mouth agape in horror, the woman obeyed his orders and handed The Crank his cigars.

"The Crank spit in the woman's face and left the store. He took the short way back, through the alley, and on the way he rummaged through some garbage cans. To his delight he found a stiff Argyle sock and a pair of Jockey

shorts. What luck, he thought. The Crank ducked into the shadows of the buildings, put the sock on his head and rubbed the underwear in his face. "Omph, ergh-h-h-h," he sighed, pushing his groin up against the building, his thoughts running rampant.

"Omph, gronko..." The Crank thought of fires, thousands of them, burning through the universe...of felonious calls...of ambulances racing to homes where none lay ill..." Omp, fa-le-le-e-e-e-e ! !!! ! n !I" Sweating and breathing heavily The Crank discarded the items in the alley and continued on to his rooming house."

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