

# The MH Literary Review 2007

## The Durham Bums

Jack Kerouac does the Durham congestion charge for MH...

Sal Moriarty

We left the jazz behind before it all kicked off. All the whiskey I'd drunk was flowing through me and clouding my senses. It was a mad night. Dean and me piled back into the convertible and roared up to the barrier in the cobbled stones. A board said '£5 to enter and no parking without a permit.' We threw our heads back to the great expanse of open sky and laughed the laughs of men unused to obeying the

pronouncements of signposts. Where was the dream now? It had left us and lay shattered and broken on cold cold stone under the brooding presence of God's mighty house.

The stars were obscured and rain hit my upturned face. Dean turned to me grinning like a man who knew that today has already gone and all that lay ahead of us was an infinitely extending expanse of dangerous horizon. He revved the great beast of an engine and

executed the most perfect and beautiful three point turn imaginable. We roared out of that place like jack rabbits beneath the tyres of trucks speeding through the Arizona night. Ahead of us stood the road. We could follow its asphalt dreams until we left this cold dead land. One straight burn south and we would arrive in a place that stood shining like a beacon in my dreams. The name of the place was *Cambridge*.



On the road to nirvana...

## Fear and Loathing in the North East

And the late Hunter S. Thompson 'does the DUCK Race'...

Richard Hadden

It was three in the afternoon when we got to the bridge and the drugs slowed down on us. The leopards prowling about predatorily and growling were cut down to a pack of people with a bad taste in hats and talking rubbish about ball games and drink and sodomy. Sodomy? Can't have heard right, but they look the sort. Is that why I'm getting all these looks?

Quickly enough I could see this was not the place for shorts and Acapulco shirts, garish pink with just enough speckles of lime to stop us being inconspicuous. I remember shouting something like: "Get off the shirts. The lime, man: these great flecks of it are making us glow in the dark". We desperately needed coats, big fuckers hacked off huskies, before we froze to death in the northern wasteland of this island. And

to cover up our shirts: I felt certain we'd be arrested for some kind of gross public indecency, and then they'd look into our eyes, and we'd have to look straight back and try to hide the paranoia and the fact that after three days with no sleep, coming down from acid, you just don't look normal. Then they'd hunt us like dogs. Or drown us like plastic ducks. That seemed to be the kind of trip these guys were on up here...

My attorney gave me one of those looks. "The fucking bigwigs and fatcats are here, man," he said lurching round, swinging his arm wildly at a woman in a furry hat, three and half ferrets at least, and a scarf five times wider than her neck. She ducked, scowled and I dragged him off to a bench somewhere to be less conspicuous. "Stoppit. Dammit. We have to be here to cover the RACE."

"No we aren't, we have

to get out of here. Look at the PEOPLE. They're watching us." He gibbered some more, gave a hacking cough, like trying to vomit the inside of his stomach through his nose and ears simultaneously.

"This is serious. The ducks, man. The DUCKS! That's all that matters."

"Excuse me". I approached some kid, far too young to responsibly stand on a bridge in this day and age, especially dressed in a pink jumper. I could sense that he was embroiled in the process that is termed as 'education.' He'd been taught from an early age to avoid men like me with fear in their eyes and paranoia seeping from every pore. "Where are the ducks? Why are they so QUIET?" I croaked. A loudspeaker interrupted his reply.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE. The guy was a bigwig. Contacts high up fuck knows where. Upper

echelon blow jobs. Not something I wanted to think about. THE DUCK RACE, SPONSORED BY BIG EVIL CONSULTANCIES. So. This was the point. Corporate racing of ducks. One small step to Vietnam. AND THE PICNIC HAMSTER SANDWICH SHOP. Bastards. They cheated me out of my tuna fish sub. I badly needed that nutrition. My trembling hand mouthed the same opinion back to me. IS ABOUT TO GO IN THREE. The throng perked itself up collectively. Poor fools. Didn't they notice doom stalking? TWO, ONE. GO. Some mechanical building equipment dumped a million plastic ducks off the bridge into the river. A senseless, senseless waste.

"Fuck that" said the crowd. "Tequila sunrise" said my attorney from the bench where he'd just stopped drooling.



The late Hunter S. Thompson