

the Death-Hole
(FOR JULIAN SCHNABEL)

the horse owner who is also a famous painter told me that he had paid 450 thousand for the horse and that it would have been a million except that the horse had this small bump but the small bump had gone away and the horse had raced to its breeding and its potential and today he was running in a million dollar race and the trainer said it was ready and that if they won it was probably on to the Kentucky Derby.

the owner-painter took us down to the walking ring to look at the horse and the horse looked good, then he gathered his friends about him and a photo was taken and then we went back upstairs to the box and we waited for them to warm up and then they were approaching the gate.

the horse read 3 to one under a morning line of 7 to 2, had one of the better jocks and the trainer was the leading money winner of the nation.

everybody had tickets on the horse. that is, almost everybody.

then they were in the gate and then they were off and the horse broke in mid-pack, then gently eased over to the rail, stayed mid-pack for a while, then along the backstretch it began to move up and then it got just about even with the leaders at a spot just before the turn that I called the Death-Hole.

I had seen thousands of races at that track and I had seen almost every horse stop at that space along the rail just before the last turn home.

but the horse looked good and I thought it might beat the Death-Hole but then it stopped and just started dropping back.

there was a terrible silence in the box about me.

the other horses came around the final curve, then the even-money favorite got to the lead in the stretch and held it all the way down to the wire.

"my horse finished last," said the owner-painter.

"there'll be another race,"
I told him.

(cont. new stanza)

2-the death-hole

2-buk

his friends started telling him jokes, trying to cheer him up.

I thanked him for inviting me over, shook hands with him and his friends, then left for the checkout room to turn in my borrowed coat and tie for my old jacket, then I walked over to my section of the track, sat down and looked at my program, there was still the 9th race.

my guess was that the owner-painter would get back to his paints and paint his way right the hell out of all of that laying his brush against the largest odds ever invented.

then I bought a ticket on the 6 horse and got out of there.

Frank
C. B. B.