



FRANK 'N HANK

Los Angeles

It is not a club. It is not a lounge or a tavern. It's neither saloon nor nightclub. It's Frank 'n Hank, and it's a Bar. Which is why, even though I had only 48 hours to spend in LA, I made it a specific point in my itinerary to go there.

Despite its accepted reputation, Frank 'n Hank is also not a dive bar. That would suggest a lack of redeeming qualities, when in fact it has everything desirable in a place to drink. If any modifier is appropriate—if you simply must use one—then please call it a Neighborhood Bar.

Outside, on Western Avenue, there may be tumultuous change, but not inside. And glory be to any creator you partake of if it always remains that way, because in the years since I'd last sat at its wooden bar, under the Christmas lights, nothing inside Frank 'n Hank looked to be out of place.

Snow, the owner and bartender, has been there for about 18 years, having purchased the shoe-box-size treasure from Frank, the original publican. (Hank was his son; they owned it long before there ever was a Koreatown to spring to life around it.) Snow pours big, she charges small (cash only). The regulars kindly slide over to make room for someone new. Music plays at a volume that doesn't necessitate shouting, which is probably why during the many hours I've spent there I've never encountered an unruly patron, never felt suffocated with hipster-infiltrators, and never wanted to leave. Including this last time.

So let's just say, if you can spot the romance and art in Barbet Schroeder's *Barfly* (or better yet, if you can find it in the novels of Charles Bukowski) then this place will feel wonderfully familiar.