

REMEMBERING CHARLIE

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JxBBs7cW1tg>

This song ("The Ghost in You" by the Psychedelic Furs, from 1984) reminds me of Charlie, who I met in 1984. I had become part of the arts community, "Fire in the Lake" -- except it didn't have a name yet; it was Phil & Christine's group and suddenly, about two years after I moved to the Bay Area, I was knocking on the door of their flat in the Haight and beckoned in...

And I don't remember him being there, in the beginning. My first memory of Charlie had to be of him *sweeping in*, in his motorcycle jacket, every fiber of him registering on me with its drama and physicality and just sheer *adorableness*.

Charlie was like Puck. He was like my big brother (except I was a few years older than him, oh well).

Oh, and I couldn't keep my hands off him.

I seem to remember the feeling was often mutual.... in a tickle-roar-out-loud-laughing-falling-on-the-floor kind of way.

Inside you the time moves and she don't fade

the ghost in you she don't fade

--that's from the (above) song, of course.

When I heard it on the radio a year ago, I was immediately back in San Francisco, and the first person I thought of was:

Charlie, oh Charlie oh dear cloven foot grinning motorcycle sweet crafter of hats and dances

And I also thought

safe to love because you were gay

--I mean, he'd never hurt me (that was a rough period in my love life, back then...).

Knowing I was going to leave a comment on this web page, I just cruised through my journals, 1984-86, the Fire in the Lake years, the years I saw him the most, hoping to find things I'd written right then and there about Charlie.

All I could find was:

I have a horrible crush on Charlie.

Ah, well.

--He was kind and sensitive and generous and silly enough to let me crush-out on him.

And I know he smelled good, and he would poke at me with words or literally with his fingers & make me drop any of the self-consciousness I used to carry around with me and suddenly I would be shrieking with laughter.

So, the two photos I offer to this memorial are very much a piece of this: one was taken at a Fire in the Lake "meeting" that had erupted into free-form dancing (many of our encounters erupted into something other than serious arts collaboration)... and the expression on his face is pretty typical, don't you think?



The other is a group portrait of Fire in the Lake (taken by Cynthia who therefore is not in it) when our book came out – and Charlie's in the center, as he should be; and I am looking up at him with my usual bemused adoration.

