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Nota di contenuto	I. Whiffs and gleams. Habitual drunkards and metaphysics : case studies from the Victorian period -- Jack London, John Barleycorn (1913) : truth -- II. The existential drinkers. Jean Rhys and drunken consciousness (1929-1939) -- Charles Jackson, The lost weekend (1944) : life projects -- Malcolm Lowry, Under the volcano (1947) : singular experiences -- Hans Fallada, The drinker (1950) : absurdity -- Brian Moore, The lonely passion of Judith Hearne (1955) : abandonment -- Frederick Exley, A fan's notes (1968) : authenticity -- Venedikt Yerofeev, Moscow-Petushki (1970) : self and others -- III. Enough : attic, Vegas, paradise. William Kennedy, Ironweed (1983) : fugitive souls and free spirits -- John O'Brien, Leaving Las Vegas (1990) : suicide -- A.L. Kennedy, Paradise (2004) : love.
Sommario/riassunto	Drinking to excess has been a striking problem for industrial and post-industrial societies -- who is responsible when an individual opts for a slow suicide? The causes of such drinking have often been blamed on genes, moral weakness, 'disease' (addiction), hedonism, and Romantic illusion. Yet there is another reason: the drinker may act with sincere philosophical intent, exploring the edges of self, consciousness, will, ethics, authenticity and finitude. Beginning with Jack London's John Barleycorn: alcoholic memoirs the book goes on to cover novels such as Jean Rhys's Good morning, midnight, Malcolm Lowry's Under the volcano, Charles Jackson's The lost weekend and John O'Brien's Leaving

Las Vegas, and less familiar works such as Frederick Exley's *A fan's notes*, Venedikt Yerofeev's *Moscow-Petushki*, and A. L. Kennedy's *Paradise*.
