Classic Poetry Series

Lew Welch

- poems -

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Dear Joanne

Dear Joanne,

Last night Magda dreamed that she,
you, Jack, and I were driving around
Italy.

We parked in Florence and left
our dog to guard the car.

She was worried because he
doesn't understand Italian.

Anonymous submission.

Lew Welch

I Saw Myself

I saw myself
a ring of bone
in the clear stream
of all of it

and vowed
always to be open to it
that all of it
might flow through

and then heard
"ring of bone" where
ring is what a

bell does

Lew Welch

Not yet 40, my beard is already white.

Not yet 40, my beard is already white.
Not yet awake, my eyes are puffy and red,
like a child who has cried too much.

What is more disagreeable
than last night's wine?

I'll shave.
I'll stick my head in the cold spring and
look around at the pebbles.
Maybe I can eat a can of peaches.

Then I can finish the rest of the wine,
write poems 'til I'm drunk again,
and when the afternoon breeze comes up

I'll sleep until I see the moon
and the dark trees
and the nibbling deer

and hear
the quarreling coons

Lew Welch

Taxi Suite (excerpt: 1. After Anacreon)

When I drive cab
I am moved by strange whistles and wear a hat

When I drive cab
I am the hunter. My prey leaps out from where it
hid, beguiling me with gestures

When I drive cab
all may command me, yet I am in command of all who do

When I drive cab
I am guided by voices descending from the naked air

When I drive cab
A revelation of movement comes to me. They wake now.
Now they want to work or look around. Now they want
drunkenness and heavy food. Now they contrive to love.

When I drive cab
I bring the sailor home from the sea. In the back of
my car he fingers the pelt of his maiden

When I drive cab
I watch for stragglers in the urban order of things.

When I drive cab
I end the only lit and waitful things in miles of
darkened houses

Lew Welch

The image, as in a Hexagram:

The image, as in a Hexagram:

The hermit locks his door against the blizzard.
He keeps the cabin warm.

All winter long he sorts out all he has.
What was well started shall be finished.
What was not, should be thrown away.

In spring he emerges with one garment
and a single book.

The cabin is very clean.

Except for that, you'd never guess
anyone lived there.

Lew Welch