

Wilderness House Literary Review 9/2

Richard Schnap
Low Rent

There was a stove and a mattress,
A sink and a table, a bathroom
In the hall no one cleaned

An elderly landlady
Who lived on the first floor
And scowled at me when I passed by

It was here I wrote poems
That few would ever hear
Flowers in a weed-strewn lot

While I learned that when dinner
Is spaghetti and beer
You discover a reason to dream

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Insomnia

He heard voices in the pitch-black night
The lonesome song of a distant train
A has-been chanteuse in an empty cabaret

The wavering whisper of a weak wind
An old man unable to sleep
Scared of the dream where he dies alone

The echoing cry of a cold siren
A fallen angel stripped of its wings
Beseeching God for a second chance

And the steady beat of his own heart
A drum setting a soldier's pace
In an army whose goal is to stay alive

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Troubadours

There was the one who was haunted
By a bitter immigrant grandmother
Who wanted to be Lou Reed
But ended up a telemarketer

And the one who kept on singing
Till somebody pulled out the plug
Who left town for Seattle
To work for a computer firm

And the one who could play guitar
As good as Jimi Hendrix
But didn't know how to get gigs
And settled for driving a cab

And the one whose final show
Had an audience of three people
And felt it was a sign
To learn to create in silence