

## Waits Tom

### "Nighthawk Postcards"

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there's a blur drizzle down the plateglass  
as a neon swizzle stick stirrin up the sultry night air  
and a yellow biscuit of a buttery cue ball moon  
rollin' maverick across an obsidian sky  
as the busses go groanin' and wheezin',  
down on the corner I'm freezin';  
on a restless boulevard at a midnight road  
I'm across town from EASY STREET  
with the tight knots of moviegoers and out of towners  
on the stroll  
and the buildings towering high above  
lit like dominoes or black dice  
all the used car salesmen dressed up in  
Purina Checkerboard slacks  
and Foster Grant wrap-around,  
pacing in front of EARL SCHLEIB  
\$39.95 merchandise  
like barkers at a shootin' gallery  
they throw out kind of a Texas Guinan routine  
"Hello sucker, we like your money  
just as well as anybody else's here"  
or they give you the P.T. Barnum bit  
"There's a sucker born every minute  
you just happened to be comin' along at the right time"  
come over here now  
you know... all the harlequin sailors are on the stroll  
in a search of "LIKE NEW," "NEW PAINT,"  
decent factory air and AM-FM dreams  
and the piss yellow gypsy cabs  
stacked up in the taxi zones waitin' like  
pinball machines  
to be ticking off a joy ride to a magical place  
waitin' in line like "truckers welcome" diners  
with dirt lots full of  
Peterbilts, Kenworths, Jimmy's and the like, and  
they're hiballin' with bankrupt brakes, over driven  
under paid, over fed, a day late and a dollar short  
but Christ I got my lips around a bottle and  
my foot on the throttle and I'm standin' on the corner  
standin' on the corner like a "just in town"  
jasper, on a street corner with a gasper lookin'

for some kind of Cheshire billboard grin  
stroking a goateed chin, and using parking meters  
as walking sticks on the inebriated stroll  
with my eyelids propped open at half mast  
but you know... over at Chubb's Pool Hall and Snooker  
it was a nickle after two, yea it was a nickle after two  
and in the cobalt steel blue dream smoke, it  
was the radio that groaned out the hit parade  
and the chalk squeaked, the floorboards creaked  
and an Olympia sign winked through a torn yellow  
shade, old Jack Chance himself leanin' up against  
a Wurlitzer and eyeballin' out a 5 ball combination shot  
impossible you say? ...hard to believe?, perhaps  
out of the realm of possibility? naaaa  
he be stretchin' out long tawny fingers out across a  
cool green felt with a provocative golden gate  
and a full table railshot that's no sweat and I leaned  
up against my bannister and wandered over to the  
Wurlitzer and I punched A-2 I was lookin' for  
something like Wine, Wine, Wine by the Night Caps  
starring Chuck E. Weiss or High Blood Pressure  
by George (cryin' in the streets) Perkins - no dice  
"that's life," that's what all the people say ridin' high  
in April, seriously shot down in May, but I know I'm  
gonna change that tune when I'm standing underneath  
a buttery moon that's all melted off to one side  
It was just about that time that the sun  
came crawlin' yellow out of a manhole  
at the foot of 23rd Street  
and a dracula moon in a black disguise  
was making its way back to its  
pre-paid room at the St. Moritz Hotel (scat)  
and the El train came tumbling  
across the trestles and it sounded  
like the ghost of Gene Krupa  
with an overhead cam and glasspacks  
and the whispering brushes of wet radials  
on a wet pavement and there's a  
traffic jam session on Belmont tonight  
and the rhapsody of the pending  
evening, I leaned up against  
my bannister and I've been looking  
for some kind of an emotional  
investment with romantic dividends  
kind of a physical negotiation  
is underway  
as I attempt to consolidate all my  
missed weekly payments, into  
one-low-monthly payment  
through the nose  
with romantic residuals and leg akimbo

but the chances are more than likely I'll probably  
be held over for another smashed weekend

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