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Quartered Hen

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Quartered Hen

Eli Redeker

The only way in is the winding two lane
Some don't have a way out.
The black stools at the counter lost their softness ages ago,
The woman behind the counter has the same problem.
None of the trucks in the lot were made in this century,
All county tags on them are the same.

The old boy's legs are bowed—not from a horse he rides daily
To check the steers, but from the old stool on which he sits.
And he drinks cool tea, and that's as strong as he'll go
For tonight at least.
He hasn't flushed a covey in a few years,
Everything is too dry.

Eventually you have to go, and you turn your back
On the duck-stamp paintings and the farmer's almanacs
And he'll shake your hand and say he'll see you down the road
But you know you won't see him
And he just sits in conditioned air,
Thankful for your ear.