

Dealer

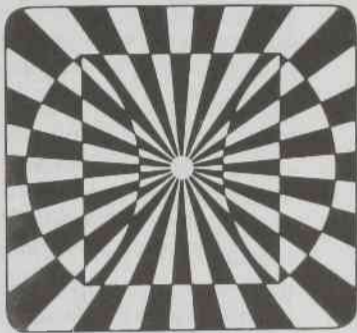
Sleazy bar, life on the run,
too much alcohol not enough luck.
The Ace of Spades.

Horseman # 4

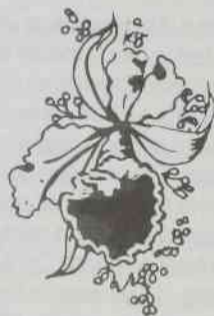
Napaltha induces an incubus untrue,
Mans mendacities dispell conflict,
Death disavows his rhapsody.

Prejudice

Cities burn in righteous moral fervor.
A beautiful color causes a death,
Dogs are color-blind.



EM III

**Grandmother**

Soothing music filled the air
While in walked those who really cared.
And the atmosphere was rather grim
When they realized it could've been them.

And in the corner laid a book upon lace,
One that recorded each name and face.
And friends of the family that were so dear,
Made comments of wishing that she were still here.

Flowers upon flowers laid against the wall
While some walked by shedding tears and some not at all.
And not a color of the rainbow was seen in the room;
All wore black to shade the gloom.

In her frail hands was but a single rose to hold
To keep her company when the nights grew cold.
And the smile she once gave to keep me alive
Was fixed on her mouth with nothing to hide.

And as they walked by, they often said,
"She looks awfully good despite the fact she's dead."
Without them knowing, I knew Grandma heard
Their every comment and crack of words.

They rolled the box on a stretcher bleak
And oh! How the wheels did squeak!
This was her final trip to take;
Life had left her no more to seek.

I solemnly remember events made to last:
The pain --- the tears falling too fast.
And I caught myself in a prayerful endeavor
"...And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever..."

---Michelle Rogers

Silhouetted Images

The instrument of my salvation
Stands silhouetted in the doorway.
I reach for her to soothe my pain
But she's not really there.

My imagination creates images
Of scenarios far-fetched and unlikely.
The worst that can happen will
Whether it does or not.

I do not know why she affects me so.
We are like one, but miles apart.
Her thoughts are an opaque mystery
Just as mine are.

What have I done to make her hurt so?
I do not wish to cause pain.
The void in my existence is like a black hole
Sucking in the unexpected.

My intentions are nothing if not honorable
But like a guided missile gone awry
Emotions don't do what I tell them to.
Helpless, I lose control.

Passive avoidance systems come into play.
It's not as free or honest as in the beginning.
Once perfection, obligatorily flawed.
Reality confirmed.

Love is double edged, Janus faced.
The happiness brought by giddy emotion
Is crushed by its own weight
When force is exerted.

Why is hindsight so crystal clear?
Like looking through both ends of a telescope.
Mistakes looked back upon are enlarged,
Minimized when encountered again.

The ache of a heart split canyons wide.
There is no perfection, no normality.
I am not like the others here.
I feel too much.

Like a jigsaw puzzle missing key pieces.
Destiny dictates a life filled with nothing.
The candle flicks and dies, smoke rises.
Silhouetted images disappear.

*I look into your eyes and wonder
if they're so far away because of thoughts of me
or of thoughts which are far away from me.
Maybe you're thinking of someone else,
who is far away from both of us
yet remains close to you in spirit.
And maybe you're wishing that I was she
or that you were there, or she here.*

*I don't know, but wish I did. Then,
I would know just how far away
to keep myself from you.*

---Jill Stricklin