



Patsy Cline

"Three Cigarettes in
the Ash Tray"

Patsy Cline

08/1957

Decca / MCA

as the sharks forever swim thru my cigarette smoke

Rob Plath

near the end of it all
we drove far to an aquarium
like staring at seals & penguins
might heal us somehow

we both were smoking
on the long car ride
& patsy cline came on
the radio

*"two cigarettes in an ashtray
my love & in a small café
then a stranger came along
& everything went wrong
now there's three cigarettes
in the ashtray..."*

after singing those stinging lines
i looked over at her face
& i saw her straining to contain
the guilt

i remember we spent most
of our time at the antarctica exhibit
watching those awkward
flightless birds waddling
over the plastic molded ice
behind glass & she commenting
on how sad they looked
diving into the water

& then later we gazed
at the large sharks dangerously gliding
thru the floor-to-ceiling tank
& she took a picture of me
in front of it which looked like
a shark was sneaking up behind
my back

the drive home was silent
she pretended to sleep
& later when we got back
to that little apartment
we fought once again

she didn't confess about the affair
but it was under there

the argument like another jagged piece
of ice sticking out of the water
while beneath loomed the enormous
crushing truth

a week later after four years
we were finished
the upcoming marriage stubbed out

*"i watched her take him from me
& his love is no longer my own
now they are gone & i sit alone
& watch one cigarette burn away..."*

& now i smoke alone & the sharks circle me
& even tho i tell them there's no blood left
only goddamn ashes
they continue their revolutions