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## Tobacco Tale

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## Tobacco Tale

*Stacey Schwimmer*

Hollowed cheeks, a hacking cough, that bluish hue,  
Signs of human failure, or a cigarette's success.

Peer pressure, age 12,  
Being cool, looking slick.  
Three inch cylinder of paper, what harm can it bring?  
It's just for now,  
Can't get hooked.

Later, bad breath,  
Yellow teeth. Not cool, not slick.  
Don't care.  
I'm not hooked.  
Really?

Then a cough that doesn't end.  
"It's just a cold."  
"Give me a light."  
I can always quit.  
Really?

Years later,  
Losing weight, breathing heavy.  
Tied to a box of Kleenex  
Or maybe an oxygen tank.  
Just give me a light.

I can't run,  
I can't walk,  
I can't breathe,  
But I can't stop.  
Really!

I'm innocent.  
Addictive drugs, subliminal control  
I have no choice,  
I'm under no choice,  
I'm under its spell.  
I may be six feet under but I'm not to blame.  
Really!