

A NEAR DAMNED DEATH EXPERIENCE

Too big a bite and too much booze. The choking seemed to stop.
The silver cord attached from birth divided with a "pop!"
And from the ceiling of the bar he watched as those around
Were working to resuscitate a victim on the ground.
"That face looks just like me, or maybe someone I once knew."
Then horror struck his breathless heart upon a closer view:
He recognized his lifeless body sprawled across the floor.
But all this vanished with an angel knocking on a door.
Some shadows grabbed him quickly and were pulling him away,
All screaming out their rightful claims to hold him in their sway.
He tried in vain to break their grasp, his will too weak with fright,
Until the doorway opened up and showered them with light.
He saw his ghostly captors with their ghostly demon glare.
The terror gripping him before was nothing to compare
With what he now felt staring into faces doomed and dead,
Beholding in their jeering eyes the facts on which they fed.
In each dark grimace he observed the damning of his life:
His hateful thoughts, the lies he told, his part in family strife.
He saw them shifting him away from truth his parents taught.
He heard the demons laugh in lustful pleasures that he sought.
The times he stole, the times he cursed, the times of sinful play,
Were in the doorway's light reflected back, to his dismay,
From other wills which he had joined with every evil choice.
With each incriminating deed he heard a fiend rejoice.
The selfish acts he thought were his were never his alone.
At every step the demons helped his soul become their own.
The angel turned to shut the door. His past began to fade.
The shadows dragged him downward on the path his sins had made.
But somewhere in the darkness came a Voice beyond the night.
The angel stopped to listen just outside the door of light:
"I hear a mother's prayer, a prayer familiar for this one.
She still has faith that I have plans to bring him to My Son.
So, even though he's not yet heeded what is good and true,
I'll give his soul another chance, and maybe We'll get through."
A medic slapped him one last blow. He coughed and took a breath.
The angel wrenched him free at once and hurled him back from death.

--David L. Hatton, 10/30/91