**The Sword Swallower’s Lament**

They promised me the blades wouldn’t be too sharp – they lied!

Yes, throat cut to ribbons, it’s true.

Though it’s best always

To spare gory details

And focus instead on my outfit.

Yes the outfit!

See how it sparkles and shines.

The boob-tube covered in sequins

Catches the light from a certain angle

The hot pants are velvet

And covered in yellow stars

A birthday gift from my mother.

They say that I look the part.

Always pays to make an effort.

A girl needs dreams

And stars, too, not just on my bum,

But also shining in my eyes.

At least, there used to be.

Once they lit up like dollar signs,

Or at least that’s what other people saw

When they looked

Which wasn’t very often.

Now my grin’s turned rather cynical

But the main thing is – electricity –

The whole house hums with it –

A superior supply

It keeps all the appliances happy

And just as long as nobody

Gives you a mains belt

Everything should be sweet.

The swords?

Now they were handed down from my grandfather

Hattori Hanzo **–** the finest steel.

They say mine is a spectacular show that draws the cheers.

At the end of the night;

Here sit I – my bloodied stomach,

My lacerated throat.