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#### LAST CARD DOWN

Aunt Anastasia drove three hundred miles  
to take her place in the deathwatch  
with Jack and me and our old dog.  
"Don't let her in," said her favorite nephew,  
my husband, when I told him she was coming.  
He called her the Queen of Clubs for her lack  
of tact, her bossy bluntness. "She'll advise me  
how to die, lay a Bible on my chest, instruct me  
on eternal protocol, drill me in correct address  
of angels. Next, she'll move her self portrait  
from my desk to Jack's, rearrange his paper piles  
while she's there, then she'll put  
the dog's bowl and blanket out in the yard."  
Holding hands, we shared chuckles  
until she arrived to prove him right.

She told our son he was improperly dressed  
for the occasion. Proudly we watched Jack  
refrain from saying what glinted in his eyes.

Bedside she bid and trumped until  
the impatient patient feigned sleep. She made  
a list of things I should do. Then I insisted  
she get some rest after her long trip.  
Jack firmly escorted her to the guest room.

My husband and I were dealt another hour,  
a final royal flush. You might say Aunt A  
was the ace. Our joker king died laughing.

--Glenna Holloway