

## Sermon on the day of the circus

Over the city  
the bulb went off, flashing  
the old men who slicked  
their heads with oil.  
They were happy when their skulls  
possessed their mirrors.

Women who were bedded with clowns  
rejoiced  
when the sheets took fire,  
and those who were able  
disappeared in their triangles.

Churchbells rang  
all the way down  
the melting steeples

The young girls danced  
through curbs of flame,  
their eyes were kindled pennies

And the fire made tongues  
caressing  
the courthouse columns.

Young men leaped  
like salmon on the highways,  
at last unashamed  
their shamefast tears  
were steaming their faces.

Sirens froze in the heat  
when smoke wrapped up the children.  
From the pall of stillness  
came a tremble of voices.  
They sang the blue blessed day,  
the rain that was golden.

Now let us all go out  
and let us get drunk together.  
We have waited so long, lord.  
Lord, we have waited so long.

-- John Knoepfle  
University City, Missouri