

## One Summer Day

Children,  
Bubbling over with anticipation  
Gawk in wonder and delight  
At the vast, inviting gates of the  
Amusement Park.

People in rainbow masks  
Are illuminated on every side  
By a storm of sunshine  
Swirling across their painted features.  
Crowds surge past for their first  
Taste of summer.

A little girl running  
Through the cobbled streets,  
Exploring this new, fascinating world,  
Stops to watch as a man  
Circles a paper cone  
Round and round  
Inside a metal tub.

Almost as if by magic,  
Pink fluffiness attaches itself  
To the cone and builds  
A giant candy monster,  
Ready to attack  
Any unsuspecting mouths and faces.

Smells waft up  
Through the warm, honeyed air  
In sugar breezes  
From all sides  
And entice the passing  
Stranger.

In every direction,  
Dazzling, blinding  
Lights crisscross,  
Weaving their secret  
Pattern through the sky  
With the giggles and shrieks  
Of a wild rollercoaster

That small children peer up at  
Longingly, and make them determined  
To grow another inch.

Spinning teacups are bursting with those  
Who have not grown up yet  
And still can brave their  
Fearsome challenge,  
While parents only want to get off  
Before they lose their breakfast  
To the garbage can,  
And their stomach regrets  
That extra waffle.

The merry-go-round  
Is an everlasting favorite.  
Its beauty and intricacy  
Surpass all others,  
The palominos and paints,  
One horse after another,  
Gracefully prancing  
In an eternal race.

Young children drag their parents  
To the next ride,  
Bouncing with impatience  
And excitement  
At the prospect of a new  
Adventure to tackle.

When the morning becomes evening,  
Teenagers begin to swarm  
To the annoyance of all.  
Boisterous and rowdy,  
They circle around their  
Favorite spots like vultures,  
Claiming them as their own.

They dare each other  
To do precarious and irrational acts  
To ascertain their bravery and  
Maintain their pride.

Adults look on  
And shake their heads  
Disapprovingly,  
Chortling on the inside  
At the foolishness and innocence  
That planted the false idea in their minds  
That they are sophisticated and mature.

The weakling of the bunch  
Is cajoled into taking up the dreadful  
Trial of the haunted house,  
Filled with the monstrosities  
That keep them up late into night,  
Fearful that if they shut their eyes  
For even a mere moment,  
The creatures will pounce upon them  
And have their malevolent way  
In their defenselessness.

The protesting participant prepares  
To face his worst nightmares  
Before he is plunged into  
Terror so keen  
It would slice him open  
With piercing edges.

He enters,  
Venturing in tentatively  
And as tense as a coil  
Wound up so tightly  
That it would spring out of its bonds  
Should the lightest feather  
Happen to alight upon it.

Undead silence resounds  
In the dark.  
Rooms with gory scenes  
Pass by him, unflinching,  
Without even  
The slightest stir.

Then, a noise  
Sounds through the  
Cavernous passageways.

Eerie and haunting,  
It bounces off the walls,  
Echoing, echoing, echoing,  
Until it is nothing more than  
The shadows in the corners.

It sounds again,  
This time followed by  
A hollow laugh.  
Eyes darting frantically here and there,  
The boy becomes panicked  
And picks up his pace,  
Eager to get out of this  
Hell house.

The moaning is nearer now  
Resonating in the boy's footprints  
And coated in undiluted agony,  
Getting closer with each step,  
Breathing down the nape of his neck.

He runs,  
Scurrying as fast as he can  
To escape his imagination's  
Conjuring of malicious demons,  
Deformed monsters,  
And gruesome clowns.

They chase him past  
Narrow corridors  
Into a maze of shattered mirrors  
Where his reflection  
Gazes back at him with  
Petrified eyes.

He stumbles with outstretched arms  
To wherever his feet take him  
Until at long last,  
The exit finds him  
And wraps him up  
In its comfort and safety.

Relieved, he steps out  
Into the light.

Then, without a word to  
Any of the curious faces,  
Immediately races to the entrance  
And jumps back into the fray  
With a screech of gleeful laughter.

When night arrives,  
The amusement park begins  
To slow down.  
Young children, elevated on  
Their parents' shoulders,  
Are silent in their slumber,  
Faces stained in the colors of the day,  
Mouths turned up in dreamy smiles.

On the other side of the park,  
Best friends sit back to back  
On a lone park bench,  
Admiring the shine of the lamplight  
In the deep blue ocean sky.

A new couple share  
Their first kiss with  
Only the stars as a witness,  
While a young woman on the ferris wheel  
Watches the same stars  
Twinkle above her warmly  
In the cold emptiness  
Of the seat next to her.

A slow song comes on the radio  
With a sad melody;  
A reminder of a memory long gone  
That is missed dearly.  
Slowly, people shuffle out,  
Leaving behind  
An abandoned amusement park,  
Sleeping until the morning sun  
Comes to wake it.