

The Ringmaster's Hand

The circus begins,
it seems, in large part,
with the Ringmaster's hand
He makes it all start.

He causes darkness to fall
except for his own light.
And he must be important
because the light is so bright.

He stands before the crowd
every word carefully chosen
and captures their souls
as if they were frozen.

He must hold the interest
of the toddler and Dad
and give them a day
like they never had

from the Grandma & Grandpa's
to the skeptical teen,
he promises acts
that have never been seen.

His fingers snap their interest
like the lion tamers whip,
that cracks through the air
as if it were ripped.

As the artist owns the canvas
with the flick of his brush,
so the Ringmaster's hand
brings the crowd to a hush.

Even the vendor
forgets his loud yell
and can not break free
from the Ringmaster's spell.

While feats defy death
in silent disbelief.
And when it is over
there are sighs of relief.

He commands not the lions
but does so their tamer,
and directs him to open
the lion container.

With the sound of his whistle
he starts up the band.
With the nod of his head
the elephants stand.

With a wave of his hand
away he will send
all the acts of the night
and it comes to an end.

And after the show
he sits by himself
stares at the photos
now lining his shelf.

Once-famous clowns
now without names,
lost in a maze
in the hall of fame.

The cigarette smoke
slowly fills his small trailer
a quarter hour shy
of total failure.

Another empty bottle
It's never as it seems
to be living on the flip side
of a Warhol dream.