

Wild Billy's Circus Story

Bruce Springsteen

The machinist climbs his Ferris wheel like a braid
And the fire-eater's lyin' in a pool of sweat, victim of the heat wave
Behind the tent, the hired hand tightens his legs on the sword
swallower's blade
Circus town's on the shortwave

Well, the runway lies ahead like a great false dawn
Fat lady, big mama, Missy Bimbo sits in her chair and yawns
And the man-beast lies in his cage sniffin' popcorn
And the midget licks his fingers and suffers Missy Bimbo's scorn
Circus town's been born

And a press roll drummer go, ballerina to-and-fro,
cartwheelin' up on that tightrope
With a cannon blast, lightnin' flash, movin' fast through the tent,
Mars-bent
He's gonna miss his fall, oh, God save the human cannonball
And the flyin' Zambinis watch Margarita do her neck twist
And the ringmaster gets the crowd to count along: 95, 96, 97

A ragged suitcase in his hand, he steals silently away from the
circus grounds
And the highway's haunted by the carnival sounds
They dance like a great greasepaint ghost on the wind
A man in baggy pants, a lonely face, a crazy grin
Runnin' home to some small Ohio town
Jesus, send some sweet women to save all your clowns

And Circus Boy dances like a monkey on barbed wire
And the barker romances with a junkie, she's got a flat tire
And now the elephants dance real funky and the band plays like
a jungle fire
Circus town's on the live wire

And the strong man Samson lifts the midget, little Tiny Tim, up
on his shoulders, way up
And carries him on down the midway, past the kids, past the sailors,
to his dimly lit trailer
And the Ferris wheel turns and turns like it ain't ever gonna stop
And the circus boss leans over and whispers into the little boy's ear
"Hey, son, you want to try the big top?
All aboard, Nebraska's our next stop"