

## TIME FOR CARNIVALS

It wasn't so long ago  
after all.  
Time becomes meaningless to us  
now and even then  
When we watched the motley-suited man  
who sold balloons  
brass trumpets brayed forgetting time  
and people  
and we never cared  
because the candied apples were so succulent.  
Concern with time  
was but a tiny watch  
born from the bottom of a Cracker Jack box.  
Carnival sounds chuck a luk lukked  
spin the wooden wheel  
chuck chuck.  
Win a prize power prize---  
Boo! screamed the zany Prince of Laughs,  
watch now watch  
the wheel will spin . . .

Up the brightly colored way  
with clowns and laughing ladies,  
a cage so big  
surely strange dark-cornered beings there.  
Now and even then  
I've heard and seen and felt in largeness  
drums and trumpets  
men who shouted---  
"Step this way friends . . .  
see the only being in creation . . .  
swallow swords . . . "  
A little fellow tugged his father's sleeve,  
I want to be a Being too, he said.  
Boo! screamed the zany Prince of Me  
No child knows the fear of filling  
each new day with Me:  
this comes with Time the Ferris Wheel  
threading in the bounds of circles  
one upon the other  
Beings all indeed!

Chuck a luk luk  
spin the wooden wheel chuck chuck.  
In the middle of the noise  
there was some grass,  
a cross-hatched fence enclosed the grass  
from which there grew a tree.  
Noses poked their way through holes  
(we never knew what the fence was for)  
Watch now see  
"Have you ever lived in a pear tree?"  
It's so simple to be a vegetable, I said---  
Almost anybody can.

And still the time stood still  
O Carnival.  
We watched the horses tread in circles too,  
chuck chuck.  
Once I laughed  
because a mare so old  
decided not to make the round again;  
she stopped less tired  
than afraid of time  
and of too many circles.  
I think sometimes that now and even then  
(though not so long ago)  
I've run a circle too of time.  
Violins against the trumpets played:  
Spin the wasted wheel of Time---  
it shares no being with a man..  
Yet all old men and mares  
tread circles, fearing  
Watch now watch  
perhaps there is a Time  
that claims a right to spin a wheel  
until it's time for carnivals again.

*by Zampiendo*

(Gerry Zampiendo Marshall)