

Nick Cave, The Carny

And no-one saw the carny go
And the weeks flew by
Until they moved on the show
Leaving his caravan behind
It was parked out on the south east ridge
And as the company crossed the bridge
With the first rain filling the bone-dry river bed
It shone, just so, upon the edge

Dog-boy, atlas, half-man, the geeks, the hired hands
There was not one among them that did not cast an eye behind
In the hope that the carny would return to his own kind

And the carny had a horse, all skin and bone
A bow-backed nag, that he named "Sorrow";
How it is buried in a shallow grave
In the then parched meadow

And the dwarves were given the task of digging the ditch
And laying the nag's carcass in the ground
And boss Bellini, waving his smoking pistol around
saying "The nag is dead meat";
"We can't afford to carry dead weight";
The whole company standing about
Not making a sound
And turning to dwarves perched on the enclosure gate
The boss says "Bury this lump of crow bait";

And then the rain came
Everybody running for their wagons
Tying all the canvas flaps down
The mangy cats crawling in their cages
The bird-girl flapping and squawking around
The whole valley reeking of wet beast
Wet beast and rotten hay
Freak and brute creation
Packed up and on their way

The three dwarves peering from their wagon's hind
Moses says to Noah "We shoulda dugga deepa one";
Their grizzled faces like dying moons
Still dirty from the digging done

And as the company passed from the valley
Into a higher ground
The rain beat on the ridge and on the meadow
And on the mound

Until nothing was left, nothing at all
Except the body of Sorrow
That rose in time
To float upon the surface of the eaten soil

And a murder of crows did circle round
First one, then the others flapping blackly down

And the carny's van still sat upon the edge
Tilting slowly as the firm ground turned to sludge
And the rain it hammered down

And no-one saw the carny go
I say it's funny how things go