

Crowd collects,
forms a circle.
Naked to the waist,
the Master of Ceremonies
drums frenzy, cracks whip,
calls the tricks
to earn applause and copper coins.
The circle thickens as the plot thickens,
Children laugh, the untouchable women
smooth their hair. A coolie
grins at me, his white teeth
gleam in the sunlight.
Only the monkeys are sad,
and suddenly
the baby begins to cry.
Anticipating time for payment,
the crowd dissolves.
Some, in shame, part
with the smallest coin they have
The show moves on.