Phase 1 of Harpo

A painted face with crooked smile
and daffodils for eyes
smoke for brain and a glossy red nose
do not (do they?) a clown make
for who can make a clown?

Surely not the young lady on the high trapeze
Or the lion tamer’s assistant
And a few twisted bits of laughter
cannot satisfy
the hunger for applause
all clowns must have sated
for why else be a clown?

It cannot be the money
Nor the chance to wear funny clothes

Clowns, clowns, all clowns
for them, to them, with them
all life means nothing and everything
an endless circle of cosmic greasepaint
coming on and coming off and coming on again

Dotted eyes
flat extended feet
and a flower that waters
for what? why?
that is for only clowns to know

Michael Billington