I wrote a poem once
about truth and justice,
when I was young
and I believed what I said
about honesty and faith in men and how these characteristics
prevailed over the greedy and self-centered ideas
that power and money were the whole of life
That's what I wrote when I was young.
And I had dreams —
I dreamed of peace in the world; For the thought
of peace would help bring an end to poverty,
hunger and disease. I thought this peace
would bring an understanding among men
And a desire to spread love into the
hearts of people instead of fear and hatred.
But that's when I was young.

Sharon Tersigni

OUR DEAR FRIEND . . . mr. clown

See the funny little clown
after his act is done
and his audience has left for the day
His act
has just
begun.
See his funny painted face
a paste-on silly grin
see his rosy stick-on cheeks
Hear his
rehearsed
routine
begin.
See his funny glued-on smile
spread across his face
a permanent feature in every way
that his tears alone can erase.
See the funny little clown
step down from the stage
without the pasted, painted face
he steps back into his cage.
See the funny little man
rehearsing his lines for the day
rehearsing his act for the next day’s show
so he’ll know just what to say.
He plays his role well for his friend
and his foe . . .
but what is the difference?
He just doesn’t know.
He goes to his dressing room,
strips the painted face away
and stares at the image in the mirror
wishing it away.
As he peels away the painted face
and the tears begin to fall
he gets up and turns off the lights
and opens the door to the hall.
He looks both ways as he enters the hall
to make sure that nobody sees
the sad little clown without his smile
when there’s no one around him to please.
He goes to his room and closes the door
shutting out the world of the real
along with the friends that really care
he doesn’t believe they can feel.
As he drifts into sleep and begins to dream
he dreams of life as it really is
and he doesn’t really like it, it seems
because it’s the icy cold fingers of the real world . . .
not his.
When he wakes in the morning
faced with the new day’s sun
he hides his face underneath his pillows
his act, again, has begun.
He rises from his bed . . .
puts his clown wig on his head . . .
paints on his sunny smile in red . . .
pastes his grin in place . . .
puts his recorded laughter in his pocket . . .
and takes one more look at the face.
As he stares into the mirror, he thinks
he hears somebody say . . .
"See the funny little fellow
get ready for the play."
And even as he sees his face
and hears his one act play . . .
he won’t admit that he’s a clown/until he hears a small child say
"See the funny little clown . . .
he has his face on upside down!"

meryl smith