CARNY

No one saw the carny leave.
The weeks flew by until they moved the show,
Leaving his caravan behind parked on the south plain.
Dog boy, Atlas, Halfman, the hired hands, all cast an eye back,
Hoping the carny would return to his own kind.

The carny had a bow-backed nag
Named Sorrow,
Now buried in a shallow grave in the parched field.

The dwarves were given the monstrous task,
Of digging the ditch,
And burying the nag in the soft earth.
Boss Bellugi waved his smoking pistol overhead,
"The nag is dead meat."
"We can't afford to carry dead weight."
Turning to the silent dwarves perched on the nail barrels,
The boss said, "Bury this lump of crow bait."

Then the rain hammered down.
Everybody ran for the wagons,
To tie the flaps down.
Mangy cats growled in their cages;
The bird girl flapped and squawked.
The whole field reeked of wet beast.  
Three dwarves peered out from the back  
Of one wagon.  
Moses said to Noah, "We shoulda dugga deepa one,"  
Their faces dying moons in the dark,  
Still dirty from the digging.  

The rain beat down on the meadow,  
And on the mound of freshly upturned earth.  
Until nothing was left at all,  
Except the risen body of Sorrow,  
Floating on the surface of the eaten soil.  
A murder of crows circled overhead.  
First one, then the others flapped blackly down.

Bill Butske