

THE CARNIVAL MAN

It's easy to drift, to float, to steep,
allowing the world to lull you to sleep,
or rushing along with the current's flow
'til the years go by and you've nothing to show.

I myself had wandered amiss,
Lost in apathy, ignorant bliss,
But I found I needed to take a stand
the day I met the carnival man.

“Step up! Step up!” he cried to the crowd.
“Play the game that will make you proud!
Win a prize that will last for years!”
But his pleas fell unheeded on deafened ears.

The man shook his head as he watched the crowd pass,
and he warned: “My friends, you are moving too fast!
Life is too short, there are prizes to claim!
But you can't win a prize if you don't play the game.”

The prizes were cheap, but I treasured the truth
that I learned from the man at the carnival booth.
For how can you win the victory cup
if you haven't the courage and time to step up?

—*Erin Gilmore*