

THE BANKER LEADS THE AUCTIONEER THROUGH THE MACHINE SHED

Tim Gustafson

And back here is a steam calliope let me tell you those babies are loud
of course they had to be that was the point. When the circus came
to town they'd parade the wagons and horses and the elephant
right down Jefferson Street and that calliope would blast away
(Dad used to say you've never seen a bear dance until
you've seen one jump to a calliope honkin' up its behind)
and the kids would come runnin' the parents right behind 'em
nobody wanted to miss out on a real community gathering
and the whole big shebang would wind up on the edge
of town at the ball field and the juggler would jump right down
the fortune teller and the clowns would move through the crowd
and all the while the tent would rise up
like a thunderhead behind them.

How much a calliope will bring is the question of the hour
and the antique appraiser got stuck in the blizzard up in Bismarck
so we may not know what it's worth til we're underway.
We'll save it for last. Folks'll stick around to see who bids.
Course the other question is how a farmer ends up
with a calliope in the shed but he's not sayin' much these days
though the wife says if you fire that sucker up it'll make music
she says the lost music of a lost time.