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The Clowns

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The Clowns · *Richard Blessing*

Suddenly they arrive, baggy pants and shoes
grotesque as marriages, faces white as the moon,
laughing and weeping.

The sad man is in love
with the funny lady. It is a trick like a pratfall:
no pain, no laughs. The sad man is sweeping
the spotlight like sawdust. He sweeps it up small
and keeps it all for himself.

The funny lady
swallows goldfish like popcorn. They turn into children
who run out from her skirts.

The man tries to kiss her,
but their mouths curve wrong. He stands on his head
and proposes to her feet. She tries to hold him,
but his shoes come off. Even the funny lady is sad.

Nobody cares. Look! There in the center ring,
where there ought to be clowns, a stupendous man,
muscles abulge like a codpiece of silk,
is taming a woman with a rope and a chair.
Their lives, their death-defying lives, glare
through the music like perfect teeth.