



Carny (1987), by Kunio Hagio

Michael S. Morris

A Night at the Carnival

The Carny

A carny is a matter of blood.

A lit city singing:  
“I was there when  
you needed someone  
Never asking  
the cause was.”

My name is Bobbi.  
After my father left  
my mother married a crazy-man

She watched my stepfather  
beat me with a closed fist  
& did nothing about it

because I was a “Lesbo—“  
I was on the road, sixteen  
years old when I found

“The Carny.” I don’t feel so  
small here! I really feel  
loved here. Everyone says,

“Hey, Bobbi!” And we talk  
as we work together  
A Carny family looks like ...

horse trailers smelling  
of hay and oats & shit.  
Amidst which we unload

lay out and assemble  
rails for rides, seat  
sections, clamps, carousels

We’re all romantics,  
usually the strange ones  
in our hometowns, places

after two weeks of  
a normal bed and normal  
food you want to leave

Going back to the Carnival!

Sitting in the Tank  
selling fries, make-up  
on my clown face

Nightlights blazing!  
a rollercoaster of  
illuminants, merry-go-rounds

Cotton candy, candy  
apples, sno-cones, tacos,  
& Elephant Ears! You hear,

“Five balls for a quarter!”  
In the old days,  
Carnies were entertainers.

Our bunks are by the woods.  
Two hammocks & a box. The  
bosses have trailers & trucks

Mornings are plastic  
cups rolling in the

wind, sounds of barkers

balloons, the gondola  
wheel, canvas tents  
over canvas signs proclaiming

wonders, sword swallows,  
eye piercers, giant horses,  
neon whirling & twirling

a centrifugal outreach  
over the circumferenced  
earth to Calliopes in unison.

I hope winter passes  
real soon. Until then,  
lots of bars, lots of all

nighters. In my home town,  
the cracks in the road are the  
same, the potholes just bigger!

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Michael S. Morris has published work in *Chiron*, *Bayou*, *Plainsong*, *Prairie Schooner* and elsewhere. His chapbook *A Wink Centuries Old* was featured in *Minotaur Magazine*. His work was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2012.