

# Hybridanelle

## Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus Fire

July 6, 1944 Hartford, Connecticut

- A1 The day the clowns cried  
b they first were light-hearted.  
A2 But fate would soon decide
- C1 who would live and who would be lost  
D1 who would escape the flames of death  
C2 in this circus holocaust
- a 7000 people were in the giant tent, hundreds died.  
b Twenty minutes into the show, fire started  
A1 the day the clowns cried.
- c They watched with startled breath  
E1 as performers stopped the show.  
D1 Frantic crowd tried to flee the Big Top.
- a But exits were blocked when they tried.  
b Many were broken-hearted.  
A2 But fate would soon decide
- e who would stay and who could go.  
F1 Ringmaster urged audience not to panic  
E1 as performers stopped the show.
- a So many people trapped inside.  
b Families search for the departed  
A1 the day the clowns cried
- f Some return in shock, desperate, frantic.  
G1 Loved ones became lost in chaos.  
F1 Ringmaster urged audience not to panic.
- a Mass confusion magnified.  
b Some would survive—some departed.  
A2 But fate would soon decide
- g for calming message did not come across  
H1 Injured and survivors mourn those held dear.  
G1 Loved ones became lost in chaos

a Tent came down. People collide,  
b trampled, pile at the exits. Grief smarted  
A1 the day the clowns cried.  
A2 But fate would soon decide

h who could escape fire and fear  
C1 who would live and who would be lost.  
H1 Injured and survivors mourn those held dear  
C2 in this circus holocaust.

**Hybridanelle:** 38 lines. Combination of Italian Villanelle and Lewis Turco's Terzanelle. Interlaced like shuffled cards. Refrains and end-lines leapfrog one another. Length of lines not set.

Rhyme Scheme: a1-b-A2- C1-D1-C2 a-b-A1 c-E1-D1 a-b-A2 e-F1-E1  
a-b-A1 f-G1-F1 a-b-A2 g-H1-G1 a-b-A1-A2 h-C1-H1-C2