

Parade.

Sitting on a tree branch  
ten feet above the ground,  
with my father.

I'm eight years old.  
In my striped shirt of yellow and red.  
It's a warm summer day,  
my birthday.

Dad's large warm hands enfold me.

I have to go.  
Don't leave me, no,  
I don't understand.

He gets down and joins the circus parade below,  
travelling a lonely road of dirt and dust,  
marching in their music for an audience of  
weeded hills and scrub.

Wiping tear-blurred eyes,  
carefully I slide  
down to the ground and begin  
a lonely following.