

HALI F. SOFALA

FREAK SHOW

My best friend
and I paid two dollars
to see the freak show.

Fat twins with oily
mustaches and stomachs
round as storage drums—

even a bearded lady
with a beard that twitched
as she laughed at the fat twins.

Two dollars more
and we saw a man turn
into a gorilla; green strobes

and smoke rolling as gorilla-man
bared his teeth at young girls—
lips curled, snarling, *run*.

And for one dollar more we saw
the world's smallest woman
in a pup tent beside the cattle show.

A dozen small machines
surrounding a body the size
of my left thigh. Manure in the air.

An oxygen mask fixed tight
to her face and band aids
like pockmarks scarring her skin.

My own image floating up to me
in the mirrors that surrounded her.