

Cloony the Clown

I'll tell you the story of Cloony the Clown
Who worked in a circus that came through town.
His shoes were too big and his hat was too small,
But he just wasn't, just wasn't funny at all.
He had a trombone to play loud silly tunes,
He had a green dog and a thousand balloons.
He was floppy and sloppy and skinny and tall,
But he just wasn't, just wasn't funny at all.
And every time he did a trick,
Everyone felt a little sick.
And every time he told a joke,
Folks sighed as if their hearts were broke.
And every time he lost a shoe,
Everyone looked awfully blue.
And every time he stood on his head,
Everyone screamed, "Go back to bed!"
And every time he made a leap,
Everybody fell asleep.
And every time he ate his tie,
Everyone began to cry.
And Cloony could not make any money
Simply because he was not funny.
One day he said, "I'll tell this town
How it feels to be an unfunny clown."
And he told them all why he looked so sad,
And he told them all why he felt so bad.
He told of Pain and Rain and Cold,
He told of Darkness in his soul,
And after he finished his tale of woe,
Did everyone cry? Oh no, no, no,
They laughed until they shook the trees
With "Hah-Hah-Hahs" and "Hee-Hee-Hees."
They laughed with howls and yowls and shrieks,
They laughed all day, they laughed all week,



They laughed until they had a fit,
They laughed until their jackets split.
The laughter spread for miles around
To every city, every town,
Over mountains, 'cross the sea,
From Saint Tropez to Mun San Nee.
And soon the whole world rang with laughter,
Lasting till forever after,
While Cloony stood in the circus tent,
With his head drooped low and his shoulders bent.
And he said," THAT IS NOT WHAT I MEANT--
I'M FUNNY JUST BY ACCIDENT."
And while the world laughed outside.
Cloony the Clown sat down and cried.

- Shel Silverstein

Cloony the Clown Activities

Some of the activities on the following pages have been adapted from lesson plans at the Haifa University Website at <http://construct.haifa.ac.il/~zlinn/cloony.htm>

I. Comprehension Questions

Answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. Who is the main character?
2. Where does he work?
3. What is his problem?
4. Describe Cloony using 5 adjectives from the first 10 lines. Begin your sentences with *He is.....*
5. How does he try to make other people laugh? Does it work?
6. What does Cloony decide to do?
7. How do people react to his story?
8. Does Cloony feel the same about his performance?
9. How does Cloony feel at the end of the poem? How can you tell?
10. What is your opinion of the reaction of the audience to Cloony's story?

II. Rhyming Words

Which words in the poem rhyme with:

1. clown - town
2. trick - _____
3. leap - _____
4. money - _____
5. trees - _____
6. laughter- _____

III. Antonyms

Find the antonyms for the following words:

1. small - big
2. short - _____
3. healthy - _____
4. awake - _____
5. laugh - _____
6. happy - _____
7. inside - _____

III. True or False

Decide whether the following sentences are true or false.

Cloony didn't look funny, that's why people didn't laugh at him.	True / False
People didn't feel good whenever Cloony told a joke.	True / False
It turned out that Cloony the Clown had no sense of humor.	True / False
It turned out that Cloony the Clown is actually a poor kids.	True / False
People in the circus understood him and realized that they were wrong about him.	True / False
The audience was cruel to Cloony the Clown.	True / False
Cloony was a sad clown.	True / False

