

Hank Snow, First Nighters

We sat a table in Lindy's and I ordered up dinners for two
My guest was a grimy intruder who had ask me to buy him a stew
But some how I pitied the beggar so shabbly dressed and so old
And I ask him the cause of his trouble and this is the story he told

I know what it means to be happy I once had a wife and some dough
We did a trapeze act together and we circled the globe with a show
But long years of dangerous acting had tired us of roaming around
And this was to be our last season we'd pack in and stay on the ground

We'd pick out a home in the country and one or two kids would be swell
She lived for no one but her Larry and I lived for no one but Nell
We counted the days till the blow off and the final act now was at hand
We sat in our dressing room waiting and we listened they struck up the band

We looked at each other in silence the last time for us to go on
We trotted out under the big top and she carried herself like a swan
I thought as she swung into action so graceful and spry as an elf
If God made a soul any sweeter he kept her up there for himself

Now thousands of people applauded the regular routine was through
The singles and doubles were perfect now we just had the climax to do
I still can't account for the crackup but God I can picture it yet
She made a bum leave on the triple and I missed her and she missed the net

With Nell gone and nothin' to live for I let myself go to the bad
I've haggled in barrooms and hey joints and they took me for all that I had
At night I lay drunk in some hallway and dream about high bars and Nell
I see her white form coming at me I miss her and let out a yell

With that the poor devil quit talking he shuddered and lowered his head
I shook him but he didn't answer I summoned for help he was dead
I looked at my watch I must hurry I'd almost forgotten my date
Right now I was due at the playhouse and opening night at eight

Right now I was due at the playhouse and opening night there at eight
So I paid for his meal and departed I smiled for I knew very well
While I was first nighting on Broadway he too was first nighting with Nell