

LEVEL BL 3.4

Barn Dance!

9756

Bill Martin, Jr.

Full moon shining, shining big and bright;
pushing back the shadows, holding back the
night. Not a thing stirring; quiet as could be,
just another whisper of the leaves on the
cottonwood tree. Old hound dog within his
sleep, dreaming after rabbits in a game of
hide and seek. Over in the farmhouse, all the
lights were out, farmer and his wife and kids,
not a one about. All except the skinny kid
with question in his head, much too full of
wonderment to spend the night in bed. He

was up about and listening - when the night owl said, Come a little closer...Come a little closer...Listen to the night...There's magic in the air...

Then the skinny kid heard it...heard it faint begin...A *plink! Plink! Plink!* On the wind's violin...Coming front he corn field...sweet n' soft n' low...Music honeyed up by the old scarecrow...A-*plinking* on the fiddle strings to tune them up just so...The scarecrow tucked the fiddle underneath his chin and fiddled out a welcomed to all his country kin. He fiddled through the woods and fields and all around the farm, bidding everybody come to a hoed own in the barn. There was so much chitin chatter when the critters all arrived, that no one saw the skinny kid ooze in an hide. Just

in time to hear the crow call the dance, *Begin!*
Grab yourself a partner and jump right in!
Right hand! Left hand! Around you go! Now
back to back your partner in a do-si-do!
Mules to the center for a curtsy and a bow!
And hey there, skinny kid! Show the old cow
how! Out came the skinny kid a-ticking and
a-tocking and a humming and a-yeeing and a
rocking and a socking, and he danced his little
toe through a hole in his stocking! He leaped
the apple barrel and the pumpkins in a pile,
and he showed them how to wagon-wheel,
barnyard style. Now rocket to the moon and
powder-puff your noses and hurry home to
mama on your little pink toeses! Five times!
Ten times! Fifteen! Twenty! Now spin once
again and that a plenty! But the fat little

pigs whirled round and round, 'till they got so dizzy that they all fell down! The sky was warming up for the coming of the day, when the skinny...hear...the night owl...say, *Morning's coming closer...Morning's coming closer... The magic time is over...Night soon be gone...*

The old dog stretched and blinked a sleepy eye. Just a blink too late to see the skinny kid slip by...He tiptoed through the kitchen...and tiptoed up the stairs...as quiet as a feather...on a breath of air...He hummed a little do-si-do and flopped himself in bed...With the wonders of the barn dance...dancing in his head.