

A SELECTION OF POETRY

by

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SANCTITY

Null is the saint who lives alone.
A saint is made by living with people
in any given circumstances.
Resilient.
A tough, tempered metal
that gives where it has to,
holds strong where it must.
Tenacious.
Stubborn vines on stark dry hills,
not what they would choose.
Saints, they struggle with stony terrain,
a hot irritating atmosphere.
Heroes.
Vineyards, without much water.
Vines with shale at their feet
let their leaves hang loose
as scarecrows
while their tough, twisted trunks
stand in silence.
Their black rich wine
teaches a tart lesson.

THE EVENING HOMEGOERS

Grey and grim they go in the train.
Thank goodness for the red-headed woman
and the kid with outlandish red socks.
Tired faces fade behind grimy windows.
Buffs, brown and blues that work hard
and don't make too much work to keep them decent.

Too tired for anything, even thinking.
 No books, no jokes or silly laughing
 as in the kids' train earlier.
 Though, the kids already go in grey and navy
 in the same unkempt coaches.
 It won't take long.

REALITY AS YOU LIKE IT: A SYMBOLIC EVOCATION

Not gay canary yellow
 Not fragrant lemon yellow
 Least of all festive daffodils
 Rather "the reflection of candles
 ...set at the head of a corpse."¹
 And then again
 "great gaps in his mouth
 between his yellow teeth."²
 Or "a few paper-covered books,
 the pages of which were curdled and damp...
 and the last... its leaves were yellow."³
 Then, too,
 "His face, shining with raindrops, had
 the appearance of damp yellow cheese..."⁴
 Decayed yellows, frayed ones, musty, crumbly ones.
 Except perhaps,
 "bright yellow gloves"⁵ against a peacock-blue
 scarf, but how such pigmatic contenders scream
 cheapness.
 Sometimes warm yellow lamp light glows behind
 Delicate curtains; more likely curtains only
 Hide things like "the table of the breakfast room
 ...covered with plates on which lay yellow
 streaks of eggs with morsels of bacon-fat and
 bacon-rind."⁶
 No signs of the Resurrection in soft yellow chicks,
 No spring yellow sun ready to spread hope over the
 drab, dingy, dank dullness of decrepit Dublin.

Joyce, James, *The Dubliners*, Penguin Modern Classics,
 Middlesex, England, reprint 1970 (first pub. 1914).
 1. "The Sisters" p. 74. 2. "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" p.123.
 3. "An Encounter" p. 235. 4. "Counterparts" p. 93.
 5. "Araby" p. 276. 6. "The Boarding House" p. 61.

CHAIN OF MORNING BEAUTY

Funny pale sun
veiled by pink haze,
streams of fog
across the countryside,
you distract me so.
I hear the crunch of
metal in my mind.
Because of you
one day my car and I
will crinkle against
a telephone pole
or something similar.

MAINTENANCE ONLY

If there were a war on,
They'd praise my efforts to keep my head above water
to keep going.
A wild flower in a vase,
Slightly worn clothes kept clean,
Such twenty-four-hours effort would sparkle with worth.
Aggressions under tow
It can't last forever.
Civility happens, not too much of a strain.
Everyone is nice to everyone.
It won't go on for long.
If it were a war,
Keeping things in order has a simple esthetic function:
Keeps spirits up.
Sharing goes on
Short term.
A sprint.
But it's not a war.
It's daily, not even a theoretic end in sight.
It has no value
Unless left undone.
The Park
Now there it was
a gate to some stairs
for anyone who cared to dare.

Down I went
onto its manicured paths
when along came the lion
with his lioness.
I felt at once
the entangling embrace
of soft warm paws
and then the crush
of the formidable jaws
which left my skull
with just a face.