

James Joyce (1882-1941)

1 *The Ballad of Persse O'Reilly*

(From *Finnegans Wake*)

Have you heard of one Humpty Dumpty
How he fell with a roll and a rumble
And curled up like Lord Olofa Crumple
By the butt of the Magazine Wall,
(Chorus) Of the Magazine Wall, 5
Hump, helmet and all?

He was one time our King of the Castle
Now he's kicked about like a rotten old parsnip.
And from Green street he'll be sent by order of His Worship
To the penal jail of Mountjoy 10
(Chorus) To the jail of Mountjoy!
Jail him and joy.

He was fafafather of all schemes for to bother us
Slow coaches and immaculate contraceptives for the populace,
Mare's milk for the sick, seven dry Sundays a week, 15
Openair love and religion's reform,
(Chorus) And religious reform,
Hideous in form.

Arrah, why, says you, couldn't he manage it?
I'll go bail, my fine dairyman darling, 20
Like the bumping bull of the Cassidys
All your butter is in your horns.
(Chorus) His butter is in his horns.
Butter his horns!

(Repeat) Hurrah there, Hosty, frosty Hosty, change that shirt on ye, 25
Rhyme the rann, the king of all ranns!

Balbaccio, balbuccio!

We had chaw chaw chops, chairs, chewing gum, the chicken-pox
and china chambers

Universally provided by this soffsoaping salesman.
Small wonder He'll Cheat E'erawan our local lads nicknamed him 30
When Chimpden first took the floor
(Chorus) With his bucketshop store
Down Bargainweg, Lower.

So snug he was in his hotel premises sumptuous
But soon we'll bonfire all his trash, tricks and trumpery 35
And 'tis short till sheriff Clancy'll be winding up his unlimited company
With the bailiff's bom at the door,
(Chorus) Bimbam at the door.
Then he'll bum no more.

Sweet bad luck on the waves washed to our island 40
The hooker of that hammerfast viking
And Gall's curse on the day when Eblana bay
Saw his black and tan man-o'-war.
(Chorus) Saw his man-o'-war.
On the harbour bar. 45

Where from? roars Poolbeg. Cookingha'pence, he bawls Donnezmoi
scampitle, wick an wipin'fampiny
Fingal Mac Oscar Onesine Bargearse Boniface
Thok's min gammelhole Norveegickers moniker
Og as ay are at gammelhore Norveegickers cod.
(Chorus) A Norwegian camel old cod. 50
He is, begod.

Lift it, Hosty, lift it, ye devil ye! up with the rann, the rhyiming rann!

It was during some fresh water garden pumping
Or, according to the *Nursing Mirror*, while admiring the monkeys
That our heavyweight heathen Humpharey 55
Made bold a maid to woo
(Chorus) Woohoo, what'll she doo!
The general lost her maidenloo!

He ought to blush for himself, the old hayheaded philosopher,
For to go and shove himself that way on top of her. 60
Begob, he's the crux of the catalogue
Of our antediluvial zoo,

(Chorus) Messrs. Billing and Co.
Noah's larks, good as noo.

He was joulting by Wellinton's monument 65
Our rotorious hippopotamuns
When some bugger let down the backtrap of the omnibus
And he caught his death of fusiliers,
(Chorus) With his rent in his rears.
Give him six years. 70

'Tis sore pity for his innocent poor children
But look out for his missus legitimate!
When that frew gets a grip of old Earwicker
Won't there be earwigs on the green?
(Chorus) Big earwigs on the green, 75
The largest ever you seen.

Suffoclose! Shikespower! Seudodanto! Anonymoses!

Then we'll have a free trade Gael's band and mass meeting
For to sod the brave son of Scandiknavery.
And we'll bury him down in Oxmanstown
Along with the devil and Danes, 80
(Chorus) With the deaf and dumb Danes,
And all their remains.

And not all the king's men nor his horses
Will resurrect his corpus
For there's no true spell in Connacht or hell 85
(bis) That's able to raise a Cain.

1939

(From *Finnegans Wake*. London: Faber and Faber, 1975)