

# Pomes Penyeach

by James Joyce

## Tilly

He travels after a winter sun,  
Urging the cattle along a cold red road,  
Calling to them, a voice they know,  
He drives his beasts above Cabra.

The voice tells them home is warm.  
They moo and make brute music with their hoofs.  
He drives them with a flowering branch before him,  
Smoke pluming their foreheads.

Boor, bond of the herd,  
Tonight stretch full by the fire!  
I bleed by the black stream  
For my torn bough!

## Watching the Needleboats at San Sabba

I heard their young hearts crying  
Loveward above the glancing oar  
And heard the prairie grasses sighing:  
*No more, return no more!*

O hearts, O sighing grasses,  
Vainly your loveblown bannerets mourn!  
No more will the wild wind that passes  
Return, no more return.

## A Flower Given to My Daughter

Frail the white rose and frail are  
Her hands that gave  
Whose soul is sere and paler  
Than time's wan wave.

Rosefrail and fair-- yet frailest  
A wonder wild  
In gentle eyes thou veilest,  
My blueveined child.

## She Weeps over Ragoon

Rain on Ragoon falls softly, softly falling,  
Where my dark lover lies.  
Sad is his voice that calls me, sadly calling,  
At grey moonrise.

Love, hear thou  
How soft, how sad his voice is ever calling,  
Ever unanswered and the dark rain falling,  
Then as now.

Dark too our hearts, O love, shall lie and cold  
As his sad heart has lain  
Under the moongrey nettles, the black mould  
And muttering rain.

### **Tutto è sciolto**

A birdless heaven, seadusk, one lone star  
Piercing the west,  
As thou, fond heart, love's time, so faint, so far,  
Rememberest.

The clear young eyes' soft look, the candid brow,  
The fragrant hair,  
Falling as through the silence falleth now  
Dusk of the air.

Why then, remembering those shy  
Sweet lures, repine  
When the dear love she yielded with a sigh  
Was all but thine?

### **On the Beach at Fontana**

Wind whines and whines the shingle,  
The crazy pierstakes groan;  
A senile sea numbers each single  
Slimesilvered stone.

From whining wind and colder  
Grey sea I wrap him warm  
And touch his trembling fineboned shoulder  
And boyish arm.

Around us fear, descending  
Darkness of fear above  
And in my heart how deep unending  
Ache of love!

## Simples

*O bella bionda,  
Sei come l'onda!*

Of cool sweet dew and radiance mild  
The moon a web of silence weaves  
In the still garden where a child  
Gathers the simple salad leaves.

A moon dew stars her hanging hair  
And moonlight kisses her young brow  
And, gathering, she sings an air:  
*Fair as the wave is, fair, art thou!*

Be mine, I pray, a waxen ear  
To shield me from her childish croon  
And mine a shielded heart for her  
Who gathers simples of the moon.

## Flood

Goldbrown upon the sated flood  
The rockvine clusters lift and sway.  
Vast wings above the lambent waters brood  
Of sullen day.

A waste of waters ruthlessly  
Sways and uplifts its weedy mane  
Where brooding day stares down upon the sea  
In dull disdain.

Uplift and sway, O golden vine,  
Your clustered fruits to love's full flood,  
Lambent and vast and ruthless as is thine  
Incertitude!

## Nightpiece

Gaunt in gloom  
The pale stars their torches  
Enshrouded wave.  
Ghostfires from heaven's far verges faint illumine  
Arches on soaring arches,  
Night's sindark nave.

Seraphim  
The lost hosts awaken

To service till  
In moonless gloom each lapses, muted, dim  
Raised when she has and shaken  
Her thurible.

And long and loud  
To night's nave upsoaring  
A starknell tolls  
As the bleak incense surges, cloud on cloud,  
Voidward from the adoring  
Waste of sou

## Alone

The noon's greygolden meshes make  
All night a veil,  
The shorlamps in the sleeping lake  
Laburnum tendrils trail.

The sly reeds whisper to the night  
A name-- her name--  
And all my soul is a delight,  
A swoon of shame.

## A Memory of the Players in a Mirror at Midnight

They mouth love's language. Gnash  
The thirteen teeth  
Your lean jaws grin with. Lash  
Your itch and quailing, nude greed of the flesh.  
Love's breath in you is stale, worded or sung,  
As sour as cat's breath,  
Harsh of tongue.

This grey that stares  
Lies not, stark skin and bone.  
Leave greasy lips their kissing. None  
Will choose her what you see to mouth upon.  
Dire hunger holds his hour.  
Pluck forth your heart, saltblood, a fruit of tears.  
Pluck and devour!

## Bahnhofstrasse

The eyes that mock me sign the way  
Whereto I pass at eve of day.

Grey way whose violet signals are  
The trysting and the twining star.

Ah star of evil! star of pain!  
Highhearted youth comes not again

Nor old heart's wisdom yet to know  
The signs that mock me as I go.

## A Prayer

Again!  
*Come, give, yield all your strength to me!*  
From far a low word breathes on the breaking brain  
Its cruel calm, submission's misery,  
Gentling her awe as to a soul predestined.  
Cease, silent love! My doom!

Blind me with your dark nearness, O have mercy, beloved enemy of my will!  
I dare not withstand the cold touch that I dread.  
Draw from me still  
My slow life! Bend deeper on me, threatening head,  
Proud by my downfall, remembering, pitying  
Him who is, him who was!

Again!  
Together, folded by the night, they lay on earth. I hear  
From far her low word breathe on my breaking brain.  
*Come!* I yield. Bend deeper upon me! I am here.  
Subduer, do not leave me! Only joy, only anguish,  
Take me, save me, soothe me, O spare me!