

Sllt – Seven Musings on a Great Book

– Sllt. Modaly monosyllabic, the ineluctably enunciated sound narrowed the attention of a nearby nouspaperaddman to matters directly at hand. He returned from brown thoughts, roused to the sound of the present, coming back to his own with great effort. He stood near the mouth of a brazen black (mindless?) mechanical brute whose leg-like supports were transversely secured by rows of sub-stanchions arranged at its sides keeping it penned and in place. His position vis-à-vis its audible end centered the sound, punting all other sounds contra (first up and then down) around and about it the better to get at the gist of it and by that I mean at the best of it. – Sllt. He heard it again. The beast had beckoned to him; a jarring juxtaposition this, yet a well timed tocsin for the trouble. *Who* spoke, not *What*, was his usual bill of fare. This printing machine, first of its kind, new in this light, indeed had spoken directly. A middle aged man, with a paunch and a penchant to ponder, was prodded further now to notice certain suddenly discernable and animated remarks offered by a range of recently inanimate objects heretofore considered by him mute and unreliable sources of meaningful converse. Such an unexpected expansion of his possible caused him to loosen his button and braces slightly to make the accommodation. As he dallied toward discernment amid the accumulating cacophony, he found himself chided by the chafing cry of an open door stymied by, though not to say hinging on, the someone's assistance it needed to close. Considering seriously for the first time such a request by such as a door, he found himself inclined to an epiphany of some note and as we do well always and everywhere to mark place for its approposity to events, calling to mind and adjusting an adage:

loquation, loquation, location; we mark it here as well. Steadfast and erect, one Leopold Bloom, M R. (mister), was head above heels, his mind perpendicularly situated in relation to the tongue and grooved boards flooring the printworks, deep in the bowels of the *National Press*, having passed peristaltically through divers passages on his way there, he had finally rounded through its doorswinging entrance and made his way to an intermediate position down along a long drumclanking lane opposite the place where Nannetti's bald pate showed him by reflection that there was indeed light at the end of this tunnel. The revelation bound briefly but rumbled back discreetly its rationale: Time is not essence man, *essence* is! Containing itself then a few moments longer, givinginness gave in to givingoutness and out from that great Hibernian Organ slipped effortlessly a freeman's prize tidbit, its mystery epiphonically revealed – "everything speaks in its own way."

Seen briefly from the road above by a horsedrawn and carriagebound Bloom, a soul soundsearching young man, wan Stephen Dedalus, B.A. (mister not yet), made use of the yellow ash sword that swung at his side; he had toyed with it, enjoyed it, and having enjoyed it employed it to taptrace a tune in the ineluctable modality of the visual. He thought as he walked, walking his thoughts, riffing along, surfing the sifting stranding sand. Walking his ear to syllables of sound, moving in time, the sounds in a line, a vociferous line, odiferous too, streaking with brine, salty and fine, silk of the kine, time out of mind, mine in a nonce, all mine at once. Accept don't refuse it, don't risk to lose it? How clearly I see from inside when I'm shut, but open again and it's gone...or am I? Enough! I'll close once again and enjoy the coda the more: Sealisten see-listen 2 waves on the shore, two times two are not surely 4; four in my hand are worth but two in *this*

bush, I must breach the pale with an almighty push. Still walking and tapping to sounds that were lapping his line he bowed only slightly so as not to be bent by convention; he sought redemption, avoiding the sound to be found in the shortest dimension between any two points (those in contention) heretofore held in suspension by a regular line of inquiry into what's done and what's not and that's why. Straitening himself at the thought of the short and straightaway straining to stray, he wandered the boundary between sight and sound, the boundary between all the preliminary, proposed, and perfectly possible, the positively fixed (in both the positive and the negative senses), practically purposeful, picked by the peck and packed by Peter Piper, preponderantly piled and poised precisely, o'er promontory perched as if pressed by Poseidon, pummeled profusely (yet none the less precious and none the less worthy), howmany lives could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck lives and the one short overwrought, as yet un-lived life of his own. To his way of thinking, he had travelled so far a curiously conceived and circuitous route: nascent unshielded beginnings, wombstretching birth, timeshortened and spacerestricted, his life dually modal, bright eyes first then shaded, love and pain (someone else's), pain and guilt (his own and her projected) then love again (anonymous, rejecting and rejected) but love lovingly loved and willingly wanted his heart still protected (untried as yet but certainly circumspected) where and when would he find her? How to be bound and to bind her? How to bind and be bound by his her and her his here in the nebulous now? To know in a way that would give him a voice to voice with no force uncertain a proper panging panegyric to pain (the real pain) of love, sweetbitterly wound and wounded, fretting foreverly forward, forward together, nebwebuously bound from end to beginning. From this new beginning at one

score and two his position summed something like this: he owed St Ignatius' for improving the odds of his getting a job and thinking more clearly with thoughts but from here out to there the odds would soon favor a woman (just one) and living for learning the well ordered down-to-earth business of life. As for wisdom...*Amare et sapere vix deo conceditur* - Even a god...But for now he was here and here it was now and out from his now flowed ribbons eternal, eternities vanishing, stranding forth first from this seascape (archaic) southeast of Dublin, where soggy Sandymount sand was holding him down, sucksinkly bound down between earth (always pending) and sky (worldwithoutending).

What's in a name? Leopold's father's name was Rudolph (Bloom formerly Virag). Odysseus' father's name was Laertes. Odysseus' patronymic suffixative last name was then (by default) Son of Laertes. Leopold's last name was Bloom (Bloom simply, as no reference carried forward to his father's change of name by deedpoll). Leopold's first first name (officially used as a prefix), used by almost all and by all of the almost (including J²) almost exclusively, was Mr. (mister); a name prime to pre-fix him at arm's length (and then some) apart. But Mr. Leopold P. Bloom's wife Molly pulled him in by the pet name she used just for him when at home or when she was alone (or sometimes with others) and gathering wool in her thoughts. Poldy: I think you'll concede that its sound is much warmer and softer and rounder and roldy; it rolls off the tongue and speaks of togetherness long lived and hard won. This brings me to wonder were marriages day to day then and now so different, the one from the other? Who's to say? Can it be featured? Is it not possible that even once upon an ancient time in rugged Ithaca where men were all men and gods were abundant, on that famous island set in

the wine-dark sea, there in the palace surrounded by the walls of their station, that when just they two were alone in their room, relaxed and turning in time to the pleasure of talk, that Penelope, that great lady, cautious and prudent (some of her suitors may have mentioned she'd been sly and duplicitous), wise and gracious daughter of the far-famed Icarus, sister of Iphtheme, of fine mind, exceptional skill, with a genius (Athene-granted) for getting her way, would Ithaca's sagacious and sensible Queen ever have reached out, could she ever have called out in some similar way to *her* husband Odysseus (man of many devices), that admirable King, the favorite of Zeus (son of Cronos; and bearing the aegis), the heir of Laertes (his heroic and keen-witted son), the master of stratagems, a sacker of cities, the peerless, ingenious, indomitable one, dauntless, illustrious, inventive and valiant, great-hearted, lion-hearted, brave and astute, calculating, crafty, wily and wise, nimble of wit (always ready and quick), noble and fair and seldom a brute, the resourceful, long suffering, much-enduring man of misfortune, unlucky, afflicted, foolhardy, far-flung and forlorn, yet self-possessed, shrewd and subtle, stalwart and steadfast, patient master of schemes, the great, the good, the glorious he, godlike and gentle, Penelope's simple Odysseus; would she have sought to, could she have thought to, should she have ought to have petnamed him Ody? It's maybe a stretch but I'd like to think so. And so if it's so, here's a word to the wise; listen and take it to heart: multidimensional men muster their manliness when mēte but at home and alone with their wives at some times it is best to be mild and receive with a smile love's meandering musings as treats.

Stephen Dedalus had a father (hard to be certain of course, but he counted him such for what it was worth – a man can't give what he hasn't got) and his father's name

was Simon: Si Dedalus A. T. I. (all too...). According to him (Si), offhand in a bar to the barmaid Miss Douce, who, as he walked in, had shown him some skin (bronzed white by the sun at the strand) and whose hand with a smile he'd indulgently pressed. He says to her, says he, and he says with some glee, he'd been judged on his looks looking up from the cradle and so as by those in attendance he'd been seen simply looking or seen looking simple he was there and then christened as Simon. Simple Simon, he says, the one met a pieman along on his way to the fair. Next he said she'd been tempting and he, not exempted from thoughts of her lovely browned skin, started to marvel and then to unravel his old gift got from the great god of gab. But in spite of his gift (she was exempted) she thought to take time to tell him (in kind) that simple she knew he was not. And so a conundrum and not a humdrum one for generations of children had tried and their mothers (God rest their souls) as surely the wives had all tried and all failed to distill by all means of love and of will just the right set of parts to mix in a bowl and heat by the fire and then serve to inspire such men as these Simons (unsimple). When by gob they were stranded as if on a voyage, their ships badly damaged by wind, battered and broken by waves; befuddled as if by the gods, they could not deduce from the facts they assembled just what they lacked, the lack that, in fact, had so thoroughly run them aground.

Stipulated: Simple Simons were not simple. Question in light of the previously stipulated: Would it be useful to look into what if any contributing factors were at play, that is to ask, what confounding variables, both internal and external, worked against them (putting their purposes cross); I wonder what Holmes, that keen and penetrating mind, might have postulated faced with this notsoelementarymydearwatson that worked

to effect and support the moriartification that Simon Simple and Co. so sloggingly endured; or to go a bit further out on a limb or better down in a bog, (now the issue begins to perk) what lurked in the murk down in the brown and green algae clogged at the bottom of the stout and fertile gene pool forth from which they issued, said factors once lurking murkily but now being risen after slow distillation in various vats of headhardened indigenous wood on a timeline (collective) to put one in mind of a long riproaringvanwinkle-like nap? Maybe it would (to answer obliquely) or maybe it would not (to cross the stroke and finish the mark); as noted above many have tried. For my part, being cognizant of and with deference to available time and allotted space, the best I can do is to lay out a few of the salient issues from which with further cogitation (considerable to be sure and then on constant reflection) a picture will begin to appear having been extrapolated from the offering encapsulated here.

The Font of Perpetual Issues erupts as a freshet sheltered by the boughs of an idyllic arboreal dell (cathedral-like given the height) and, having emerged from the earth, in a trice three diconcircomvergent streams flow out into the past, the present and the future... in the ineluctable modality of motion these small streams (small and inviting when seen from the source) become three main tributaries (with indulgence - tributaries of tribulation), intertwining as they flow along intricate arcane and labyrinthine ways, forward and back, around and about, sudden stops constraining, dips declining, rises rising up to the top, plunges hurtling, slipping, sliding, de facto forces unseen but very real and (shielded by Hephaestian handiwork) with force presiding, restlessly, relentlessly, replenishing the stone and grit that lines the sluice. The issues issuing perpetually forth train and restrain and still always pertain then to them (the Simons

supposedly simple) – them with themselves in the present (present company excluded) who, denying any fact's de believe they act alone and suppose that it's them that's presiding, them with themselves in the past (Mothers and Das, mainly Mothers, but still...presiding), and them with themselves in the stream streaming out to all possible futures – God (Fathomless Father called on in earnest when times run tough), Holy Mary, Mother of God, Sweet Jesus (only Son of), St. Patrick himself, Himself the Pope, all of his Cardinals and Bishops and Priests, and Parnell et.al. (Mothers et.al.), presiding. The order and emphasis of the previous listing arranged according to personal penchant and surely cast neither in bronze nor marble nor stone – Next and in sub- are the rivulet issues applying to them as themselves on their own: Are they short, are they tall, are they fat (such as that) or are they exceedingly slim, do they drink (almost goes without saying), do they smoke, can they sure tell a joke when they're out and in front of their friends; are they gay and ebullient or lugubrious, chapfallen and grey; are they young are they old, do they buy, have they bought, or have they even been sold; do they sail out to sea or stay home and lub on the land, and in demeanor do they warm to the touch or retreat and show they are cold, are they hero-like cowards or cowardly heroes or heroes with feet made of clay or do they fall out among possible elses living their lives day to day; are they retiring and reticent or brash with a touch of the bawd and the bold; do they think and speak fast or speak and move slowly keeping a moderate meaningful pace; do they do what they do in a clandestine manner or stand up and deal face to face; no matter the case in any or all listed in the listing above or any and all others any others think of, since it's come to the crux let's nail it like this - do they like what they see when it's seen in themselves or does't scratch a bit deeper the

wide riven rift of resentment they hold with a cold point of steel and with prejudice give them the rub? Next we hearken to heritability as through these Simons it's passed, passing down to the next generation (the study of Ont recapping the study of Phil) and on to the next after that (find here the consanguineous begats) but instead I am sure (citing similar above) that the point is the same (and it's surely been made) so for now let's just leave that at that. Next we turn to them as themselves eye to eye with the issues they take with their country (whether turned in on or out of its natural bounds). Though shared with (at least) the countries of Spain and of France these issues bear most on their neighbors (ungallant and callus) found close over waves (navarrous knaves) due east where the sun as it slants mimics the glare cast by the eyes (penetrating pairs) of perpetually pompous pantopragmatics and long evening shadows at day's end each day leave the island's inhabitants frayed, un-hosted and filled, quite full of ire, for the puissance and pelf siphoned off for themselves by their patronizing panarchical hosts found posted and ranked in martial attire in and around in their cities and towns, among (to be sure) but mostly, by gob, up on top of them. So how does it feel way down in the stack? Sure it's not much like up at the top. And So! say the Irish, who can hardly believe it. And So! say the English, So What!! "Doh!" to quote Homer, they should have foreseen it; the Irish in Ireland would never break down, would never give in, nor ever in this life give up. Some students it seems (with English degrees) and points at the ends of their noses have mustered the nerve to come to observe the singular ways of the Irish when seen at close range, habitatically speaking, nostalgic to lose what's among them that's quaint. I think that what's droll is their sense of surprise when they find that it's they (having studied abroad) who alone among men, connate

men of Ireland, can utter old Gaelic innately. What they did was done and what they sang was sung whether in Latin or Spanish, Italian or French, English or Gaelic or brogue, and since all the above is still shy of our goal and won't as yet show as a picture let's brace up the corners and square them at once and maybe at least get a frame: of the issues outstanding, there are still a few (among many unspoken) that will serve to fill in the gaps; there are those with themselves and their families at home and those with all others and sundry they meet when out and at large, not to mention the ones with their pets (dogs or cats) should they have one or those with their books (whether begged or borrowed, put on the shelves, packed or pawned or purloined) or their land in the form of its acres (most likely rented) or their livestock (likely the same) presenting itself in the various forms of their horses and mules (for racing or plowing or pulling or in the end sold for the glue), pigs (finding uses for all but the squeal), cattle (both dairy and beef) and likewise the insides (with relish) for feasting, the sheep (black or white or wooly or shorn) and last but not least (for the eggs and the meat) we end with the goats and the fowl. These pieces are random and knotty I grant you as though they were found and fit in a field but when seen from askance and taken together resemble a form like that of the steed Odysseus sent out to Troy in that the shape that's presented as simply a horse sure is a horse as it's seen but its value lies not on the outside and shouldn't be taken at face without time to consider and further examine the complexity engendered by what's going on on the inside, by far the more active space. Suffice it to say with the forces we've named and the issues we know are in play that at least we've embarked on the journey; the picture we seek (if ever completed) itself still remains to be seen. But if called on to offer considered opinion, resisting glum silence,

and all broody mooding and straddling a curb 'round last-minute bubblegushing thoughtwishfulenthoozings, I'll hazard a guess that when coalesced the picture might show up like this: three thunderous streams, commingled and seen in three-quarter view through the trees, that nearing the end of a precipitous drop, drop straight in a torrent far down to a pool of deep green where waves pushing back up spread circumcentricly out to cover with noise and boisterous activity the leprechaun's secret supernumerary spot which is dear and is golden and is just out of reach – beauty in-depth, the great Irish heart.

In Dublins fair city my first Irish Molly where girls are so pretty she appeared to me in song twas there that I first met and I cannot say the words nor read them now without hearing the accompanying tune sweet Molly Malone never been to Ireland down on the ground flew over it once on my way to they dont call it the Emerald Isle for nothin I remember telling people so beautiful and green from the air set against the blue of the sea from thirty-five thousand thats where they all came from the Mulloys and the O Sheas dropped the O I guess for one reason or another one side of the past Green the other side English never did the family tree my cousin Paul was trying John Pat my mothers cousin and his wife Frieda she was a red haired Irish beauty had a crush maybe when I was at an age Margaret my grandmother one of twelve my mother Margarets only child named my sister for the county Kerry Alice and Clara and Bessie and Margaret the last four sisters lived in the homeplace next to the church little town in the country not too far visited when I was a child climbed the apple trees in the back filled the basket brought em in and cored em with that crank handled thing bolted to the table on the porch just the job for me in the summer eating the pies too mysteries of the

quiet church churchyard dark at night stories of the ghost that appeared to Bessie felt real was real to her me too once she told me nobody disputed leprechauns real too with their pots of gold and their rainbows hard to find harder to catch nobody ever did that I ever heard of the little people they called them magical little beings from a magical little country as she wheeled her wheelbarrow through streets broad and narrow great grandfather Martin Mulloy married Molly Shea crying cockles and mussels alive alive oh came to America to raise a family twelve children for the love of Mike all lived alive alive oh alive alive oh crying cockles and mussels alive alive oh I only ever knew a handful and of them all were gone before I was fifteen with me still in many ways humor kindness cantankerosity mixed all together now she was a fishmonger and sure twas no wonder for so were her mother and father before Buddy fought the devil in a bottle of gin and in the end he won and he helped a lot of other men win or lose John and Vincent younger brothers werent so lucky died young of it painters worked together good men Vincent sat at my mothers table one night after supper and lined up the crystal water glasses and filled each one just so then wet his finger and rubbed the rims and played the most beautiful tune and they each wheeled their barrows through streets broad and narrow my father not Irish but he had a lot of the Irish in him loved to sing loved to read loved to make things climb up on a telephone pole to shade a story when he couldve told it plain standing on the ground crying cockles and mussels alive alive oh he was the one first told me about Joyce had a framed poster of him at his house showed him as a young man wide brimmed hat round specs moustache and a bow tie she died of a fever and no one could save her and that was the end of sweet Molly Malone got that picture in the front room now leaning back against the wall on top of the

bookshelf read his first big book too finally wanted to read it for years better read out
can't get the rhythm any other way got another Irish Molly now she is something she is
her and her husband Poldy nephrologist said he ought to have been put in the budget
got her pictured with deep dark reddish brown hair and a glint in her eye and plenty to
say for herself now her ghost wheels her barrow and a pretty clear window on what she
might be thinking in the middle of a night one night when she was thinking thank you
James for the noctuary through streets broad and narrow raised by the regiment Lunita
who Laredo young girl young woman wife mother singer had some fun suffered too like
we all do a fully functional human woman for all that crying cockles and mussels alive
alive oh lots of details in the book about her lots left out too but thats all the better no
way to get everything and who needs it mystery yes humor yes conundrama yes
something to keep striving for yes and something to leave em with yes Mollys monepic
Yes.