

SSES by James Joyce -- I -- Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed. A yellow dressinggown, ungirdled, was sustained gently behind him on the mild morning air. He held the bowl aloft and intone d--Introibo ad altare Dei. Halted, he peered down the dark winding staircase and called out coarsely: --Come up, Kinch! Come up, you fearful jesuit! Solemnly he came forward and mounted the round gunrest. He faced about and blessed gravely thrice the tower, the surrounding land and the awaking mountains. Then, catching sight of Stephen Dedalus, he bent towards him and made rapid crosses in the air, gurgling in his throat and shaking his head. Stephen Dedalus, displeased and sleepy, leaned his arms on the top of the staircase and looked coldly at the shak ing gurgling face that blessed him, equine in its length, and at the light untoussured hair, grained and hued like pale oak. Buck Mulligan peeped an instant under the mirror and then covered the bowl smartly. --Back to barracks! he said sternly. He added in a preacher's tone: --For t christ, O dearly beloved, is the genuine Christine; body and soul and blood and ouns. Slow music, please. Shut your eyes, gentles. One moment. A little trouble about those white corpuscles. Silence, all. He peered sideways up and gave a long slow whistle of call, then paused awhile in rapt attention, his even white teeth glistering here and there with gold points. Chrysostomos. Two strong shrill whistles answered through the calm. --Thanks, old chap, he cried briskly. That will do nicely. Switch off the current, will you? He skipped off the gunrest and looked grave ly at his watcher, gathering about his legs the loose folds of his gown. The plump shadowed face and sullen oval jaw recalled a prelate, patron of arts in the middle ages. A pleasant smile broke quietly over his lips. --The mockery of it! he said gaily. Your absurd name, an ancient Gr eek! He pointed his finger in friendly jest and went over to the parapet, laughing to himself. Stephen Dedalus stepped up, followed him wearily halfway and sat down on the edge of the gunrest, watching him still as he propped his mirror on the parapet, dipped the brush in the bowl and lathered cheeks and neck. Buck Mulligan's gay voice went on. --My name is absurd too: Malachi Mulligan, two dactyls. But it has a Hellenic ring, hasn't it? Tripping and sunny like the buck himself. We must go to Athens. Will you come if I can get the aunt to fork out twenty quid ? He laid the brush aside and, laughing with delight, cried: --Will he come? The jejune jesuit! Ceasing, he began to shave with care. --Tell me, Mulligan, Stephen said quietly. --Yes, my love? --How long is Haines going to stay in this tower? Buck Mulligan showed a shaven cheek over his right shoulder. --God, isn't he dreadful? he said frankly. A ponderous Saxon. He thinks you're not a gentleman. God, these bloody English! Bursting with money and indignation. Because he comes from Oxford. You know, Dedalus, you have the real Oxford manner. He can't mak e you out. O, my name for you is the best: Kinch, the knife-blade. He shaved warily over his chin. --He was ravaging all night about a black panther, Stephen said. Where is his guncase? --A woful lunatic! Mulligan said. Were you in a funk? --I was, Stephen said with energy and growing f ear. Out here in the dark with a man I don't know raving and moaning to himself about shooting a black panther. You saved men from drowning. I'm not a hero, however. If he stays on here I am off. Buck Mulligan frowned at the lather on his razorblood. He hopped down from his p arapet and began to search his trouser pockets hastily. --Scutter! he cried thickly. He came over to the gunrest and, thrusting a hand into Stephen's upper pocket, said: --Lend us a loan of your noserag to wipe my razor. Stephen suffered him to pull out and hold up on show by its corn er a dirty crumpled handkerchief. Buck Mulligan wiped the razorblood neatly. Then, gazing over the handkerchief, he said: --The bard's noserag! A new art colour for our Irish poets: snotgreen. You can almost taste it, can't you? He mounted to the parapet again and gazed out over D ublin bay, his fair oakeale palm stirring slightly. --God! he said quietly. Isn't the sea what Algy calls it: a grey sweet mother? The snotgreen sea. A scrotumlightening sea. Epi oinopa ponton. Ah, Dedalus, the Greeks! I must teach you. You must read them in the original. Thalatta! Th alatta! She is our great sweet mother. Come and look. Stephen stood up and went over to the parapet. Leaning on it he looked down on the water and on the mailboat clearing the harbourmouth of Kingstown. --Our mighty mother! Buck Mulligan said. He turned abruptly his grey sea -arching eyes from the sea to Stephen's face. --The aunt thinks you killed your mother, he said. That's why she won't let me have anything to do with you. --Someone killed her, Stephen said gloomily. --You could have knifed down, damn it, Kinch, when your dying mother asked you. B uck Mulligan said. I'm hyperboean as much as you. But to think of your mother begging you with her last breath to kneel down and pray for her. And you refused. There is something sinister in you... He broke off and lathered again lightly his farther cheek. A tolerant smile curled hi s lips. --But a lovely mummer! he murmured to himself. Kinch, the loveliest mummer of them all! He shaved evenly and with care, in silence, seriously, an elbow rested on the jagged granite, leant his palm against his brow and gazed at the fraying edge of his shiny black coat-sleeve. Pain, that was not yet the pain of love, fretted his heart. Silently, in a dream she had come to him after her death, her wasted body within its loose brown graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath, that had bent upon him, mute, reproachful, a faint odour of wetted ashes. Across the threadbare cuffedge he saw the sea hailed as a great sweet mother by the wellfed voice beside him. The ring of bay and skyline held a dull green mass of liquid. A bowl of white china had stood beside her deathbed holding the green sluggish bile which she had torn up from her rotting liver by fits of loud groaning vomiting. Buck Mulligan wiped again his razorblood. --Ah, poor dogsbody! he said in a kind voice. I must give you a shirt and a few noserags. How are the secondhand breeks? --They fit well enough, Stephen ans wered. Buck Mulligan attacked the hollow beneath his underlip. --The mockery of it, he said contentedly. Secondleg they should be. God knows what poxy bowsy left them off. I have a lovely pair with a hair stripe, grey. You'll look spiffing in them. I'm not joking, Kinch. You look dam nable when you're dressed. --Thanks, Stephen said. I can't wear them if they are grey. --He can't wear them, Buck Mulligan told his face in the mirror. Etiquette is etiquette. He kills his mother but he can't wear grey trousers. He folded his razor neatly and with stroking palps of fingers felt the smooth skin. Stephen turned his gaze from the sea and to the plump face with its smokeblue mobile eyes. --That fellow I was with in the Ship last night, said Buck Mulligan, says you have g.p.i. He's up in Dottville with Connolly Norman. General paralysis of the insane! He s aw the mirror a half circle in the air to flash the tidings abroad in sunlight now radiant on the sea. His curling shaven lips laughed and the edges of his white glittering teeth. Laughter seized all his strong welkint trunk. --Look at yourself, he said, you dreadful bard! Stephen bent fo rward and peered at the mirror held out to him, clef by a crooked crack. Hair on end. As he and others see me. Who chose this face for me? This dogsbody to rid of vermin. It asks me too. --I pinched it out of the skivvy's room, Buck Mulligan said. It does her all right. The aunt always keeps plainlooking servants for Malachi. Lead him not into temptation. And her name is Ursula. Laughing again, he brought the ee you out! Drawing back and pointing, Stephen said with bitterness: --It is a symbol of Irish art. The cracked looking-glass o f a servant. Buck Mulligan suddenly linked his arm in Stephen's and walked with him round the tower, his razor and mi ror tucked away from Stephen's peering eyes. --The rage of Caliban at not seeing his face in a mirror, he said. If Wilde were only alive to k now you have more spirit than any of them. Parried again. He fears the lancet of my art as I fear that of his nea. He's stinking with money and thanks you're not a gentleman. His old fellow made his tin by selling jalapa ng for the island. Hellenise it. Cranly's arm. His arm. --And to think of your having to beg from these swi nt men? Is it Haines? If he makes any noise here I'll bring down Seymour and we'll give him a ragging th alefaces: they hold their ribs with laughter, one clapping another. O, I shall expire! Break the news to the table, with trousers drawn at heels, chased by Ades of Magdalen in the quadrangle. A dear gardener, aproned, m ing motes of grasshalms. To ourselves... new paganism... omphalos. --Let him stay, Stephen s aid. Cough it up. I'm quite frank with you. What have you against me now? They halted, lookin hen freed his arm quietly. --Do you wish me to tell you? he asked. --Yes, what is it? Buck Mul passed his brow, fanning softly his fair uncombed hair and stirring silver points of anxiety y your house after my mother's death? Buck Mulligan frowned quickly and said: --What? W n the name of God? --You were making tea, Stephen said, and went across the landing to who was in your room. --Yes? Buck Mulligan said. What did I say? I forget. --You said, S eem younger and more engaging rose to Buck Mulligan's cheek. --Did I say that? he ask ed asked, your mother's or yours or my own? You saw only your mother die. I see them a beastly thing and nothing else. It simply doesn't matter. You wouldn't kneel down to Jesuit strain in you, only it's injected the wrong way. To me it's all a mockery and bea tercups off the quilt. Humour her till it's over. You crossed her last wish in death and y suppose I did say it. I didn't mean to offend the memory of your mother. He had spoken heart, said very coldly: --I am not thinking of the offence to my mother. --Of what then? on his heel. --O, impossible person! he exclaimed. He walked off quickly round the headland now grew dim. Pulses were beating in his eyes, veiling their sight, and he felt re, Mulligan? --I'm coming, Buck Mulligan answered. He turned towards Stephen and sa nd come on down. The Sassensack wants his morning rashers. His head halted again for day, he said. I'm inconsequent. Give up the moody brooding. His head vanished below th and brood Upon love's bitter mystery For Fergus rules the brazen cars. Woodshadows fl . Inshore and farther out the mirror of water whitened, spurred by lightshed hurrying fe trings, merging their twining chords. Wavewhite wedded words shimmering on the dim ti neatness him, a bowl of bitter waters. Fergus' song: I sang it alone in the house,Stephen do to her bedside. She was crying in her wretched bed. For those words, Harding: I leads in her locked drawer. A birdcage hung in the sunny window of her hous invisibility. Phantalasm mirthe, folded away: muskpurfumed. And no more en she had approached the sacrament. A cored apple, filled with brown irts. In a dream, silently, she had come to him, her wasted body with etted ashes. Her glaring eyes, staring out of death, to shake and ben th rattling in horror, while all prayed on their knees. Her eyes on me t virginium chorus excipiat. Ghoul! Chewer of corpses! No, mother! L r, it came nearer up the staircase, calling again. Stephen, still trembl n--Dedalus, come down, like a good mosey. Breakfast is ready. Haines is r Jesus' sake, Buck Mulligan said. For my sake and for all our sakes. His uch him for a quid, will you? A guinea, I mean. --I got paid this morning. Ste phen said. --Four shining sovereigns, Buck Mulligan cried with delight. We' d trumped down the stone stairs, singing out of tune with a Cockney accent: O, wo ry time On coronation day! Warm sunshine merrying over the sea. The nickel shaving t over to it, held it in his hands awhile, feeling its coolness, smelling the clammy slaver of th rvant tout. A server of a servant. In the gloomy domed livingroom of the tower Buck Mulligan's gowne high barbacans: and at the meeting of their rays a cloud of coalsmoke and fumes of fried grease floated, turning. --W ded been sitting, went to the doorway and pulled open the inner doors. --Have you the key? a voice asked. --Dedalus has. --Haines stood at the door, welcomed him warmly and entered. Haines stood at the doorway, looking out. Stephen halied his upended valise to the table and sat down to wait. Buck Mulligan tossed the fry on to the dish beside him. Then he carried the dish and a large teapot over to the table, set them down heavily and sighed with relief. --I'm melting, he said, as the candle remarked when.... But, hush! Not a word more on that subject! Kinch, wake up! Bread, butter, honey, Haines, come in. The grub is ready. Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts. Where's the sugar? O, jay, there's no milk. Stephen fetched the loaf and the pot of honey and th e buttercandle from the locker. Buck Mulligan sat down in a sudden penitence. --What sort of a kip is this? he said. I told her to come after eight. --We can drink it black, Stephen said thirstily. There's a lemon in the locker. --O, damn you and your Paris fads! Buck Mulligan said. I want Sand cyocove milk. Haines came in from the doorway and said quietly: --That woman is coming up with the milk. --The blessings of God on you! Buck Mulligan cried, jumping up from his chair. Sit down. Pour out the tea there. The sugar is in the bag. Here, I can't go fumbling at the damned eggs. He hacked through the fry on the dish and slapped it out on three plates, saying: --In nomine Patris & Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Haines sat down to pour out the tea. --I'm giving you two lumps each, he said. But, I say, Mulligan, you do make strong tea, don't you? Buck Mulligan, h eweing thick slices from the loaf, said in an old woman's wheedling voice: --When I makes tea I makes tea, as old mother Grogan said. And when I makes water I makes water. --By Jove, it is tea, Haines said. Buck Mulligan went on chewing and wheedling: --So I do, Mrs Cahill, says sh . Begob, ma'am, says Mrs Cahill, God send you don't make them in the ne pot. He lunged towards his messmates in turn a thick slice of bread, impaled on his knife. --That's folk, he said very earnestly, for your book, Haines. Five lines of text and ten pages of notes about the folkl and the fishgoods of Dundrum. Printed by the weird sisters in the year of the big wind. He turned to Stephen and asked in a fine puzzled voice, lifting his brows: --Can you recall, brother, is mother Grogan's tea and water pot spoken of in the Mabinogion or is it in the Upanishads? --I doubt it, said Stephen gravely. --Do you now? Buck Mulligan said in the same tone. Your reasons, pray? --I fancy, Stephen said as he ate, it did not exist in or out of the Mabinogion. Mother Grogan was, one imagines, a kinswoman of Mary Ann. Buck Mulligan's face smiled with deligh t. --Charming! he said in a finical sweet voice, showing his white teeth and blinking his eyes pleasantly. Do you think she was? Quite charming! Then, suddenly overlouding all his features, he growled in a hoarse rasping voice as he heaved again vigorously at the loaf: --For old Mary Ann She doesn't care a damn. But, rising up her petticoats... He cramped his mouth with fry and munched and droned. The doorway was darkened by an entering form. --The milk, sir! --Come in, ma'am, Mulligan said. Kinch, get the jug. An old woman came forward and stood by Stephen's elbow. --That's a lovely morning, sir, she said. Glory be to God. --To whom? Mulligan said, glanced at her. Ah, to be sure! Stephen reached back and took the milking from the locker. --The island