

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Richard Jones: Three Poems

Richard Jones · Wednesday, September 18th, 2019

### Dublin

My Irish friend said,  
“Let’s go for a dander,”  
So we walked along the Liffey,  
Then turned to have a drink  
At Ryan’s with its famous clock,  
Engraved mirrors, and snug rooms.  
Ryan’s is the Victorian bar where  
Patrick Kavanagh once held court  
And Ludwig Wittgenstein rented  
And lived in an upstairs room.  
We paused a moment in silence  
To contemplate that and drink.  
The two of us agreed in a poet’s life  
The worst thing that could happen  
Would be to find our pint gone  
Flat and tepid. “Lead with a verb,”  
My friend advised. “Nothing lasts.”  
Irish tends to disregard indefinite  
Articles, using only the definite.  
“I’m going to see the mother,”  
I told my friend. “She’s 96,” I said,  
“And has no bell on her bike.”  
My friend wore a yellow blazer.  
I sported new black tennis shoes  
With fire-red ankles and heels.  
When we got back to our walk,  
Twilight was falling. Neither of us  
Could decide exactly what color  
To call the sky, but we embraced  
The mystic heavens, the mysterious,  
And the purposeful limits of language.  
We shook hands and agreed we’d meet again  
To find more things we could not name

And evening skies we had no words for,  
 Knowing that if we walked long enough  
 And far enough, we could trust  
 The words to find us.

\*

## Khrushchev

I liked the way Nikita Khrushchev  
 Banged his brown shoe on the table  
 Until he got the world's attention.  
 Khrushchev reminded me of Picasso,  
 Who outwitted everyone with a bull  
 Made of a bicycle seat and handlebars.  
 The bull reminds me of Picasso's obsession  
 With the minotaur, which makes me think  
 Of Homer and Ovid and Sisyphus. The rock  
 Given to Sisyphus was meant as a curse;  
 But the rock was a gift from the gods,  
 So doesn't that make it wonderful?  
 I refuse to believe it a punishment  
 To push the heavy rock up the hill.  
 Every morning when I wake, I feel lucky,  
 And thank God for the big gray rock  
 Waiting by my bed. How good it is  
 To have a rock to set one's heart to,  
 And a mountain I can call my very own!

\*

## The Desert

I didn't know what to make of the waterless riverbed—  
 The orange sand fine as dust, the broken, crumbly rocks.  
 I followed the path that cut through the arid landscape,  
 A wide, dry rivulet that curved and pushed forward  
 Through a rocky ravine. I felt like some lost prophet  
 Walking an elegant long brushstroke made by the sky.  
 As far I could see the land was barren and lifeless.  
 I'd not find another living person for a hundred miles.  
 The sun bright as fire, the day hot, I tried to imagine  
 The spring river flowing all around me, snowmelt  
 Or sudden storm flood, the water up to my waist,  
 The current sometimes gentle, sometimes fast,  
 But always insistent, the water whispering, "Hurry—  
 We've somewhere to go and we must to go there now."

*(Author photos by Alexis Rhone Fancher)*

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