

34. James Joyce

H.E. Bates

Never (1928)  132

This short story is about a teenage girl called Nellie who wants to leave her village and escape to London.

It was afternoon: great clouds stumbled across the sky. In the drowsy, half-dark room the young girl sat in a heap near the window, scarcely moving herself, as if she expected a certain timed happening, such as a visit, sunset, a command... Slowly she would draw the fingers of one hand across the back of the other, in the little hollows between the guides, and move
5 her lips in the same sad, vexed way in which her brows came together, and like this too, her eyes would shift about, from the near, shadowed fields, to the west hills, where the sun had dropped a strip of light, and to the woods between, looking like black scars one minute, and like friendly sanctuaries the next. It was all confused... There was the room, too... The white keys of the piano would now and then exercise a fascination over her which would keep her
10 whole body perfectly still for perhaps a minute. But when this passed, full of hesitation, her fingers would recommence the slow exploration of her hands, and the restlessness took her again.

Yes: It was all confused. She was going away: already she had said a hundred times during the afternoon— ‘I am going away... I am going away. I can’t stand it any longer.’ But she
15 had made no attempt to go, In this same position, hour after hour had passed her and all she could think was: ‘Today I’m going away, I’m tired here, I never do anything, it’s dead, rotten.’ She said, or thought it all without the slightest trace of exultation and was sometimes even methodical when she began to consider: ‘What shall I take? The blue dress with the rosette? Yes. What else? What else?’ And then it would all begin again: ‘Today I’m going away.
20 I never do anything.’

It was true: she never did anything. In the mornings she got up late, was slow over her breakfast, over everything—her reading, her mending, her eating, her playing the piano, cards in the evening, going to bed. It was all slow-purposely done, to fill up the day. And it was
25 true, day succeeded day and she never did anything different.

But today something was about to happen: no more cards in the evening, every evening the same, with her father declaring: ‘I never have a decent hand, I thought the ace of trumps had gone! It’s too bad!’ and no more: ‘Nellie, it’s ten o’clock- Bed!’ and the slow unimaginative climb of the stairs. Today she was going away: no one knew, but it was so. She was catching
30 the evening train to London.

‘I’m going away. What shall I take? The blue dress with the rosette? What else?’
She crept upstairs with difficulty, her body stiff after sitting. The years she must have sat, figuratively speaking, and grown stiff! And as if in order to secure some violent reaction against it all she threw herself into the packing of her things with a nervous vigor, throwing



35 in the blue dress first and after it a score of things she had just remembered. She fastened her bag: it was not heavy. She counted her money a dozen times. It was all right! It was all right. She was going away!

She descended into the now-dark room for the last time. In the dining room someone was rattling¹ teacups, an unbearable, horribly domestic sound! She wasn't hungry: she would be in London by eight-eating now meant making her sick. It was easy to wait. The train went at 40 6.18. She looked it up again: 'Elden 6.13, Olde 6.18, London 7.53.'

She began to play a waltz. It was a slow, dreamy tune, ta-tum, turn, ta-tum, turn, ta-tum, turn, of which the notes slipped out in mournful, sentimental succession. The room was quite dark, she could scarcely see the keys, and into the tune itself kept insinuating: 'Elden, 6.13, Olde 6.18,' impossible to mistake or forget.

45 As she played on she thought: 'I'll never play this waltz again. It has the atmosphere of this room. It's the last time!' The waltz slid dreamily to an end: for a minute she sat in utter silence, the room dark and mysterious, the air of the waltz quite dead, then the teacups rattled again and the thought came back to her: 'I'm going away!'

She rose and went out quietly. The grass on the roadside moved under the evening wind, 50 sounding like many pairs of hands rubbed² softly together. But there was no other sound, her feet were light, no one heard her, and as she went down the road she told herself: 'It's going to happen! It's come at last!'

'Elden 6.13. Olde 6.18.'

Should she go to Elden or Olde? At the crossroads she stood to consider, thinking that if she 55 went to Elden no one would know her. But at Olde someone would doubtless notice her and prattle about³ it. To Elden, then, not that it mattered. Nothing mattered now. She was going, was as good as gone!

Her breast, tremulously warm, began to rise and fall as her excitement increased. She tried to run over the things in her bag and could remember only 'the blue dress with the rosette,' 60 which she had thrown in first and had since covered over. But it didn't matter. Her money was safe, everything was safe, and with that thought she dropped into a strange quietness, deepening as she went on, in which she had a hundred emotions and convictions. She was

1. **rattling:** it. *facendo tintinnare*

2. **rubbed:** it. *strofinare*

3. **prattle about:** it. *blaterare*

never going to strum that waltz again, she had played cards for the last, horrible time, the loneliness, the slowness, the oppression were ended, all ended.

65 'I'm going away!'

She felt warm, her body tingled with a light delicious thrill that was like the caress of a soft night-wind. There were no fears now. A certain indignation, approaching fury even, sprang up instead, as she thought: 'No one will believe I've gone. But it's true-I'm going at last.'

70 Her bag grew heavy. Setting it down in the grass she sat on it for a brief while, in something like her attitude in the dark room during the afternoon, and indeed actually began to rub her gloved fingers over the backs of her hands. A phrase or two of the waltz came back to her... That silly piano! Its bottom G was flat, had always been flat! How ridiculous! She tried to conjure up some sort of vision of London, but it was difficult and in the end she gave way again to the old cry: 'I'm going away.' And she was pleased more than ever deeply.

75 On the station a single lamp burned, radiating a fitful yellowness that only increased the gloom. And worse, she saw no one and in the cold emptiness traced and retraced her footsteps without the friendly assurance of another sound. In the black distance all the signals showed hard circles of red, looking as if they could never change. But she nevertheless told herself over and over again: 'I'm going away-I'm going away.' And later:

80 'I hate everyone. I've changed until I hardly know myself.'

Impatiently she looked for the train. It was strange. For the first time it occurred to her to know the time and she pulled back the sleeve of her coat. Nearly six-thirty! She felt cold. Up the line every signal displayed its red ring, mocking her. 'Six-thirty, of course, of course.' She tried to be careless. 'Of course, it's late, the train is late,' but the coldness, in reality her fear,

85 increased rapidly, until she could no longer believe those words.

Great clouds, lower and more than ever depressing, floated above her head as she walked back. The wind had a deep note that was sad too. These things had not troubled her before, now they, also, spoke failure and foretold misery and dejection. She had no spirit, it was cold, and she was too tired even to shudder.

90 In the absolutely dark, drowsy room she sat down, telling herself: 'This isn't the only day. Some day I shall go. Some day.'

She was silent. In the next room they were playing cards and her father suddenly moaned: 'I thought the ace had gone.' Somebody laughed. Her father's voice came again: 'I never have a decent hand! I never have a decent hand! Never!'

95 It was too horrible! She couldn't stand it! She must do something to stop it! It was too much. She began to play the waltz again and the dreamy, sentimental arrangement made her cry. 'This isn't the only day,' she reassured herself. 'I shall go. Some day!'

And again and again as she played the waltz, bent her head and cried, she would tell herself that same thing: 'Some day! Some day!'

James Joyce

Dubliners (1914)

The Dead 133

The last story in Dubliners takes place at the annual dance held by Kate and Julia Morkan and their niece. The story focuses on the perceptions of the male protagonist, Gabriel Conroy, Kate and Julia's nephew. Over the course of the evening, Gabriel interacts with the party guests, his aunts, and his wife Gretta. His thought processes and reactions to his wife's early romance with Michael Furey force him to view the world from a point of view other than his own egocentrism and lead him to a new awareness of human mortality as a common bond among human beings. His sense of self dissolves at the end of the story and his own identity is lost and fades out into a white, snowy, immaterial world, as the passage below shows.

She was fast asleep.

Gabriel, leaning on his elbow, looked for a few moments unresentfully on her tangled hair and half-open mouth, listening to her deep-drawn breath. So she had had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake. It hardly pained him now to think how poor a part he, her
 5 husband, had played in her life. He watched her while she slept as though he and she had never lived together as man and wife. His curious eyes rested long upon her face and on her hair: and, as he thought of what she must have been then, in that time of her first girlish beauty, a strange friendly pity for her entered his soul. He did not like to say even to himself that her face was no longer beautiful but he knew that it was no longer the face for which Michael
 10 Furey had braved death.

Perhaps she had not told him all the story. His eyes moved to the chair over which she had thrown some of her clothes. A petticoat string dangled to the floor. One boot stood upright, its limp upper fallen down: the fellow of it lay upon its side. He wondered at his riot of emotions of an hour before. From what had it proceeded? From his aunt's supper, from his
 5 own foolish speech, from the wine and dancing, the merry-making when saying good-night in the hall, the pleasure of the walk along the river in the snow. Poor Aunt Julia! She, too, would soon be a shade with the shade of Patrick Morkan and his horse. He had caught that haggard look upon her face for a moment when she was singing *Arrayed for the Bridal*. Soon, perhaps, he would be sitting in that same drawing-room, dressed in black, his silk hat on his knees.
 10 The blinds would be drawn down and Aunt Kate would be sitting beside him, crying and blowing her nose and telling him how Julia had died. He would cast about in his mind for some words that might console her, and would find only lame and useless ones. Yes, yes: that would happen very soon.

The air of the room chilled his shoulders. He stretched himself cautiously along under the sheets and lay down beside his wife. One by one they were all becoming shades. Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age. He thought of how she who lay beside him had locked in her heart for so many years
5 that image of her lover's eyes when he had told her that he did not wish to live.

Generous tears filled Gabriel's eyes. He had never felt like that himself towards any woman but he knew that such a feeling must be love. The tears gathered more thickly in his eyes and in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had
5 approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead. He was conscious of, but could not apprehend, their wayward and flickering existence. His own identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world: the solid world itself which these dead had one time reared and lived in was dissolving and dwindling.

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward.
5 Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns.
10 His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

James Joyce

Ulysses (1922)

Leopold: the flaneur¹ 134

The following passage from *Ulysses* is a short example of thoughts flowing freely into one another ('free direct thoughts' or 'direct interior monologue').

He crossed at Nassau street corner and stood before the window of Yeates and Son², pricing the field glasses³. Or will I drop into old Harris's and have a chat with young Sinclair? Well-mannered fellow. Probably at his lunch. Must get those old glasses of mine set right. Goerz lenses, six guineas. Germans making their way everywhere. Sell on easy terms to capture trade. Undercutting. Might chance on a pair in the railway lost property office. Astonishing the things people leave behind them in trains and cloak rooms. What do they be thinking about? Women too. Incredible. Last year travelling to Ennis had to pick up that farmer's daughter's bag and hand it to her at Limerick junction. Unclaimed money too. There's a little watch up there on the roof of the bank to test those glasses by.

1. **flaneur**: stroller. Word first used by Baudelaire
2. **Yeates and Son**: an optician's shop
3. **field glasses**: binoculars

James Joyce

Ulysses (1922)

Romance at Howth Castle 135

The last chapter in *Ulysses*, *Penelope*, is written totally in the stream of consciousness technique and takes place in the early hours of Friday, June 17, when Molly recollects memories of all kinds while dozing in bed near her husband. In the passage below, she recalls the day he proposed to her: the same scene had already been evoked by Leopold in section 8. The two passages therefore report different viewpoints of the same episode.

Molly's View (chapter 20)

[...] The sun shines for you he said the day we were lying among the rhododendrons on Howth head¹ in the grey tweed suit and his straw hat the day I got him to propose to me² yes first I gave him the bit of seedcake³ out of my mouth and it was leapeyear like now yes 16 years ago my God after that long kiss I near lost my breath yes he said I
 5 was a flower of the mountain yes so we are flowers all a woman's body yes that was one true thing he said in his life and the sun shines for you today yes that was why I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is and I knew I could always get round him⁴ and I gave him all the pleasure I could leading him on till he asked me to say yes and I wouldn't answer first only looked out over the sea and the
 10 sky I was thinking of so many things he didn't know of Mulvey and Mr Stanhope and Hester and father and old captain Groves and the sailors playing all birds fly and I say stoop and washing up dishes they called it on the pier⁵ and the sentry in front of the governors house with the thing round his white helmet poor devil half roasted and the Spanish girls laughing in their shawls and their tall combs and the auctions in the
 15 morning the Greeks and the jews and the Arabs and the devil knows who else from all the ends of Europe and Duke street and the fowl market all clucking⁶ outside Larby Sharans and the poor donkeys slipping half asleep and the vague fellows in the cloaks asleep in the shade on the steps and the big wheels of the carts of the bulls and the old castle thousands of years old yes and those handsome Moors all in white and
 20 turbans like kings asking you to sit down in their little bit of a shop and Ronda⁷ with the old windows of the posadas glancing eyes a lattice⁸ hid for her lover to kiss the

1. **Howth head:** it. *promontorio di Howth, a nord-est di Dublino*

2. **I got him to propose to me:** it. *gli feci fare la proposta di matrimonio*

3. **seedcake:** it. *biscotti all'anice*

4. **get round him:** win him over (it. *raggirarlo, persuaderlo a fare ciò che volevo*)

5. **the sailors ... pier:** it. *i marinai che giocavano al piattello e alla cavallina, come dicevano loro sul molo*

6. **the fowl market all clucking:** it. *il mercato dei polli tutti chioccianti*

7. **Ronda:** a town in Andalusia

8. **a lattice:** it. *una grata*

iron and the wineshops half open at night and the castanets⁹ and the night we missed the boat
 at Algeciras the watchman going about serene with his lamp and O that awful deepdown
 torrent O and the sea the sea crimson sometimes like fire and the glorious sunsets and the
 25 figtrees in the Alameda gardens yes and all the queer¹⁰ little streets and pink and blue and yellow
 houses and the rosegardens and the jessamine and geraniums and cactuses and Gibraltar as a girl
 where I was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls
 used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as
 well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me
 30 would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him
 down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and
 yes I said yes I will Yes.

9. **castanets:** it. *nacchere*

10. **queer:** bizzarre, strange

Leopold's View (chapter 8)

Glowing wine¹ on his palate lingered swallowed². Crushing in the winepress³ grapes of
 Burgundy. Sun's heat it is⁴. Seems to a secret touch telling me memory. Touched his sense
 moistened remembered. Hidden under wild ferns⁵ on Howth. Below us bay sleeping sky. No
 sound. The sky. The bay purple by the Lion's head. Green by Drumleck⁶. Yellowgreen towards
 5 Sutton. Fields of undersea⁷, the lines faint brown⁸ in grass, buried cities. Pillowed⁹ on my coat
 she had her hair, earwigs¹⁰ in the heather scrub¹¹ my hand under her nape¹², you'll toss me all¹³.
 O wonder! Coolsoft¹⁴ with ointments her hand touched me, caressed: her eyes upon me did not
 turn away.
 Ravished¹⁵ over her I lay, full lips full open, kissed her mouth. Yum. Softly she gave me in my
 10 mouth the seedcake warm and chewed. Mawkish¹⁶ pulp her mouth had mumbled¹⁷ sweet and
 sour with spittle¹⁸. Joy: I ate it: joy. Young life, her lips that gave me pouting¹⁹. Soft, warm,
 sticky grumjelly lips²⁰. Flowers her eyes were, take me, willing eyes. Pebbles fell. She lay still. A
 goat. No-one. High on Ben Howth rhododendrons a nanny²¹ walking surefooted, dropping
 currants²². Screened under ferns she laughed warmfolded²³. Wildly I lay on her, kissed her; eyes,
 15 her lips, her stretched neck, beating, woman's breasts full in her blouse of nun's veiling, fat
 nipples upright. Hot I tongued her. She kissed me. I was kissed. All yielding²⁴ she tossed²⁵ my
 hair. Kissed, she kissed me.

1. **Glowing wine:** it. *Vino brillante*

2. **lingered swallowed:** it. *indugiava ancora nel palato dopo essere stato inghiottito*

3. **winepress:** it. *pigiatrice*

4. **Sun's heat it is:** it. *Il calore del sole, ecco cos'è*. The inversion shows that Leopold is drunk and the heat numbs his faculties

5. **ferns:** it. *felci*

6. **Drumleck:** name of a place near Dublin

7. **of undersea:** it. *sottomarini*

8. **faint brown:** it. *marrone chiaro*

9. **Pillowed:** My jacket was like a pillow under her head

10. **earwigs:** it. *forbicine*, a type of insect

11. **scrub:** rub (it. *sfregano*)

12. **nape:** it. *nuca*

13. **you'll toss me all:** this should be in direct speech

14. **Coolsoft:** Fresh and soft

15. **Ravished:** Overdelighted (it. *Rapito*)

16. **Mawkish:** Disgusting (it. *Nauseante*)

17. **mumbled:** it. *aveva biascicato*

18. **spittle:** it. *saliva*

19. **pouting:** it. *sporgendosi*

20. **grumjelly lips:** it. *labbra 'gommo-gelatinose'*

21. **nanny:** it. *capra*

22. **currants:** it. *uvetta*

23. **warmfolded:** in a warm embrace

24. **All yielding:** Abandoning herself (it. *Abbandonandosi tutta*)

25. **tossed:** it. *scompigliò*