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## Returning to De Valera's Cottage

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RETURNING TO DE VALERA'S COTTAGE

Coming down the hill we could see the summer  
village, mill-wheel and stream  
churning up the wet sunlight.  
The village seemed brighter  
then without the dark weight  
of his heavy cloak or a threat  
of his sword-cane over their  
votes. Their great child had been dead for years.

So that ordinary children came back onto the street  
while adults gossiped lightly  
unafraid of the official cars—  
not that he was held in awe,  
but the walking evidence of  
so intense a life frightened  
the whole village and kept them from serious thought.

In finding his cottage we found a life that was  
inside ourselves. A small  
moment of sorrow. A tear  
riding down the glass of  
our eyes like blood fall-  
ing from a bullet wound.  
We kicked the heap of weeds  
with our heels and cursed the narrowness of the path.