James Joyce

A Portrait of the Man Who Is,

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and of Ulysses is said to have been second to none.

There are men in Dublin who will tell you that the sweet voice has gone; and there are a few women, lost to youth, who will add: "One night he was singing and the next he wasn't, and there's been none since the like of it." For the singing voice of James Joyce, author of The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and of Ulysses is said to have been second to none.

That Joyce was once a singer—may not come as a revelation to the casual reader of his books; one must perhaps have spent one of those strangely aloof evenings in one of the "vines" of Dublin, as it appeared in The Little Review to have realized the singing quality of his words. For tradition has it that a singer must have a touch of brando, a joyous partir forth of first the right leg and then the left, and a sigh or two this side of the cloister, and Joyce has none of these.

I had read Dubliners over my coffee during the war, I had been on one or two theatrical committees just long enough to suggest the production of Esicles, his one play. The Portrait had been consumed, turning from one show to the other, but it was not until I came upon his last work that I sensed the singer. Lines like: "So stood they both awhile in wan hope harkening to the wave" gave me the shivers. Joyce's writing is extemely large waves bring fission of the fields, spherical potatoes and iridescent kale and onions, pearls of the earth, and red, green, yellow, brown, rust, sweet, big bitter ripe pulped apples and passion fruit, fit for princes and raspberries from their canes," or still beter the singing humour in that delicious execution scene in which the "learned prelate kneel in a most Christian spirit in a pool of rain-water."

Yes, then I realized Joyce must indeed have leaded life as a singer. Those very tender singer, and occasionally no voice can hold out over the brutality of life without breaking—he turned to quill and paper, for so he could arrange, in the interests of peace, the abundant inadequacies of life, as a laying out of jewels—jewels with a will to decay.

Joyce, the Man

Yet of Joyce, the man, one has heard very little. I had seen a photograph of him, the collar up around the narrow throat, the beard, heavier in those days, descending into the holes of the live roses. I had been told that he was going blind, and we in America learned from Ezra Pound that "Joyce is the only man on the continent who continues to produce, in spite of poverty and sickness, working from eight to sixteen hours a day."

I had heard that for a number of years Joyce taught English in a school in Trieste, and this is almost all of his habits, of his likes and his dislikes, nothing, unless one dared come to some conclusion about them from the number of facts hidden under an equal number of impossibility, in his telling Ulysses.

And then, one day, I came to Paris. Sitting in the cafe of the Deux Magots, that faces the little church of St. Germain des Prés, I saw approaching the back of a tall man, with head slightly lifted and slightly

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turned, giving to the wind an orderly diaster of red and black hair, which descended sharp
ly into a right angle at the back. He wore a blue grey coat, too young it seemed, partly because he had thrust his gatherings behind his belt; partly because there had been
clipped it, lay two full inches above the hips.

At the moment of seeing him, a remark made to me by a mystic flashed through my mind—"A man who has been more crucified on his sens-
ibilities than any writer of our age," and I said to myself—"this is a strange way to recognize a man I never held my eye upon."

Because he had heard of the suppression of The Little Review on account of Ulgyres and of the subsequent trial, he sat down opposite me, who was familiar with the whole story, ordering a white wine. He began to talk at once.

"You pity him," he said, seeming to choose his words for the age rather than their apt-
ess. "There I have damned, all this howling in my book—or worse they may take it in some more serious way, and on the honour of a gentleman, there is not one single soul line it in."

For a moment there was silence. His hands, peculiarly limp in the introductory shake and peculiarly pulpy, running into a thickness that the base gave no hint of, lay, one on the stem of the glass, the other, forgotten, palm out, on the most delightful delicious it has ever been my happiness to see. Purple with alternate doe and dog heads. The does, tiny scarlet tongues hanging out over bloody lower lips, downed in a light wool, and the dogs no more ferocious than the mother animal who adheres to his master through the seven cycles of wigs.

He saw my admiration and he smiled. "Made by the hand of my grandmother for the first hunt of the season" and there was an-
other silence in which he arranged and lit a cigar.

"All great talkers," he said softly, "have spoken in the language of Sterne, Swift or the Restorator, I think."

He glanced at the Chameleon through a microscope in the morning, repeated it through a telescope in the evening."

"And in Ulgyres?" I asked.

"They don't call them, great talkers" he answered, "them and the things they forget. In Ulgyres they don't know health. What a man says, says, thinks, and what such thing, thinking, saying does, to what you Freidians call the conscious part of psychoanalysis he broke off, 'it's neither more nor less than blackness'."

He raised his eyes. There is something un-
expected in them, the same painless arena in plants long hidden from the sun—and sometimes a little jeer that goes with a lift and running of the bright lip. His Appearance

PEOPLE say of him that he looks both sad and I stared. He does look sad and he does look tired. He is a thin man, I think, a boy who has procured some medieval permission to sorrow out of time and in no place; the weari-
ness of one self-subjected to the creation of an over above all cases.

If I were asked what seemed to be the most characteristic pose of James Joyce I should say that he was lean; turned further away than disgust and not so far as death, for the turn of displeasure which as an it so far, yet the only thing at all like it, is the look of the crincklen stricken animal. And this I should add—think of him as a heavy man yet this, drink-
ing a thin cool wine with lips almost hidden in his high narrow nose, or making the etern-
nal cigar, held slightly above shoulder-level, and never moved until consumed, the mouth brought to and taken away from it to the eject the sharp juts of yellow smoke..."

Because he does not ask him questions one must know him. It has been my pleasure to talk to him many times during my four months in Paris and walking on the banks of rivers and of re-

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liation, of the instinctive genius of the church which chose, for the singing of its hymns, the voice without "overtones"—the voice of the esenuch. We have talked of women, of women she seems a lot disinterested. Were I vain I should say he is a failure, but I am certain he is only a little skeptical of their existence. We have talked of Ilsen, of Strind- berg, Shakespeare. "Hamlet is a great play, written when the author was twenty-five," and of Strindberg, "No drama behind the hysterical raving."

We have talked of death, of rats, of horses, of the sea; languages, climates and offerings. Of artists and of Ireland.

"The Irish are people who will never have leaders, for at the great moment they always despair them." They have produced one skeleton—Parnell—never a man.

Sometimes his wife, Nora, and his two children have been with him. Large children, almost as tall as he is himself, and Nora walks under fine red hair, speaking with a brogue that car- ries the dread of Ireland in it; Ireland as a place where poverty has become the art of scarcity. A brogue a little more "defiant than Joyce's which is tamed by preoccupation.

Joyce has few friends, yet he is al- ways willing to leave his writing table and his white coat of an evening, to go to some quiet near-by cafe, there to discuss anything that is not "artistic" or "ballyhoo." In Calabria he often found him writing into the night, or drinking at an Irish saloon. No one else came upon him as he lay full length on his stomach poring over a valve full of notes for his new novel—"for", as for Nora says, "It's the great fana- ticism is on him, and it is coming to no end." Once he was reading out of the book of saints (he is never without it) and muttering to himself that this particular day's saint was "A devil of a fellow for bringing on the rain, and we wanted it to go for a stroll."

However it is, he will be gone away for the evening, for he is simple, a scholar, and sees nothing objectionable in human beings if they will only remain in phase.

Yet he has been called eccentric, mad, incoherent, unintelligible, yes and futur- istic. One wonders why, thinking what a fine lyric beginning that great Kalez- lasis, I have no doubt put up an imper- tient addenda for foliage,—the thin sweet lyricism of Chamber Music; the casual inevitability of Dubliners; the passion and prayer of Stephen Dedalus, who said that he would go alone through the world.

"A man, not only separate from all others, but to have not even one friend," and he has, if we admit Joyce to be Stephen Dedalus by no means do. "I will not serve that which I no longer believe in, whether it be your home, my fatherland, or my church; and I will try to express myself in my art as freely as I can, until the end of the defense I allow myself to use, silence, exile and cunning."

This is somehow Joyce, and one won- ders if, at last Ireland has created her man.
James Joyce

A sketch made by Miss Loy in Paris of Joyce, who, in exile from his native Ireland, has continued, in spite of personal misfortunes and professional difficulties, to extol the virtues of his native land. In this year of great international social events, the American writer, who has been labeled a "diplomat" in literature, has added a new volume to his works. "Ulysses," his latest novel, has been banned in many countries, but has achieved permanent significance through its publication in a few select libraries. The novel, which chronicles the lives of a single day in Dublin, has been hailed as a masterpiece of modernist literature.

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