

THE TELLING OF MY DAYS

A hybrid piece – poetry/theatre - by Dennis Corcoran

I hadn't written in a long while. Or sung. Or danced. I had, in truth, never danced ... but had wished once to have done so.

I hadn't played or prayed. I had, in fact, done nothing to nourish my soul in so very long.

And I, like any creature held too often, too long in life's indifferent grip, began to wither and withdraw, instinctively wishing to preserve what of a meaningful life remained. Reluctantly yet need-fully, I sought shelter in a self-imposed, though, for all of that, no less suffocating isolation.

There were brief moments when self-pity nearly smothered me. *[pause]* Beware of that! ... pity, whether that of self, or worse ... that of others.

It seemed, somehow, I had risen to a pinnacle, not of my own making ... or choosing. And, though, I admit, I bathed, willingly, in this somehow false glow which surrounded me, I never once, claimed agency, privilege or place ... all of which made the end, the fall, my fate, far more the difficult to face.

All that fall, Mrs. Rooney. *All that fall*.^{*} Yet, as she, the sentenced prisoner, so stoically stated ... *[pause]* ... well, none of that.

[very long pause during which he/she moves, unsure, confused]

It was ... what? ... weeks, months ... *[aghast]* years? ... I know not which ... before I, in a moment of calmed heart, realized ... no, tasted ... smelt ... sensed somehow ... that I would be okay. That I was, perhaps, already okay. That all this anguish ... pretension ... talk of prose and poesy ... was, perhaps, mere tinkling brass ... an empty shell ... an Emperor, though fully clothed, passing before his adoring ... yet, still, huddled ... masses ...

... and I, costumed, disguised, as it were, as a huddled mass ... hidden within a manure rick ... fearful he would notice as he passed ... was yet unable to suppress a small grin ... which grew into a quiet chuckle ... rising, a contagious crescendo, until I, soiled, yet unashamed, stinking of life's open road, roared with laughter at the folly of it all!

[long pause]

And I took up my pen and began to write. *[he rises to leave, stops, full standing ... a smile, subtle laughter, joy?]* This, then, is the telling of my days.

^{*} A reference to Samuel Beckett's radio play of the same title.