

LAGUN CÀRÀ

**2020 Basque Bloomsday
-a tribute to Éamon Roche**



Snippets
by Joe Linehan

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www.laguncara.com



Best of Basque (Irish) on Bloomsday

Here is a selection of snippets, one from each of the 11 contributions to the Bloomsday Bilbao 2020 booklet. While the complete texts are accessible online on our LagunCara web page (<http://www.laguncara.com/images/docs/202006BasqueBloomsdayBooklet.pdf>), this list of fragments will be useful for those of us who may not have (had) the time to read all the texts in their entirety. The only ones who might conceivably be offended are Nazi leaders Hitler, Himmler, Göering and Göebbels, My comments in green.

Joe Linehan [JL]
Hernani, July 2020

Amigos de Ulises (Friends of Ulysses)

EDURNE BARAÑANO

Ulises, la obra más conocida de nuestro escritor irlandés, me he acercado muchas veces en los últimos ya treinta años, con deleite por su asombroso estilo, aun cuando no he culminado su lectura, bendita paciencia.

(Many times over the past thirty years, I have picked up the best known work by our Irish author, *Ulysses*, - and with great delight, given his gobsmacking style, but still not having finished it (bless-ed be the patient!).

[JL] “bless-ed” pronounced as two phonemes, as in *bless-ed are the meek* (in the Christian Bible and in Monty Python’s *Life of Brian*, to which a spectator responds, ‘I’m glad they’re getting something, they have a hell of a time’).

Joyce County

NIAMH T. BRANNELLY

Rahoon in Galway is the location of one of Joyce’s best-known poems *She Weeps Over Rahoon*. Joyce wrote this poem as Nora visited the grave of her previous lover.

The Claddagh ring has its origins in Galway and in the novel, Molly believes the ring is unlucky because the man who gave it to her sailed away never to be heard from again and because the man she THEN gave it to next also sailed off to die. Molly’s two missing lovers are comparable to Nora and her previous lovers. “*That clumsy Claddagh ring for luck that I gave Gardner going to south Africa where those Boers killed him with their war and fever but they were well beaten all the same as if it brought its bad luck with it like an opal or pearl still it must have been pure 18 carrot gold because it was very heavy but what could you get in a place like that the sandfrog shower from Africa and that derelict ship.*”

[JL] “18 carrot gold”. Is there some significance in not using the correct word “carat”?

Ten things about Joyce

ROCCO CAIRA

2. The scrotum tightening sea. And snot green too. This is pure magic. I cannot think of a more precise and vivid description for anything. And I can vouch for both the colour of the water on the south side of Dublin and the physiological effect of entering it, once past knee-level. Perhaps because of my Mediterranean genes, but the tightening effect in my case was so great that it always felt like the contents had been fired upwards to just under my chin.

[JL] Who has a scrotum? Who has two or more scrota? Who has none? (♫♫ "Hitler has only got one ball, Göring's are so very small, Himmler's are very similar, And poor old Goebbels has no balls at all ♫♫). [to the melody of the Colonel Bogey March].

An undiminished appetite for Joyce

BILL FLEMING

... (the 2003 movie) "Bloom" directed by Sean Walsh (buy the DVD, it's magnificent!). Shortly after seeing the film version, I acquired on its appearance the handsome Penguin Modern Classics edition which was the 3000th Penguin. A moment of great import comparable with the striking of the match in "Aeolus", determining the subsequent course of my life. The best "Ulysses" you can get today is the Penguin "Annotated Students' Edition" created by Declan Kiberd using the 1961 Bodley Head edition with added line numbering.

[JL] What was "*the striking of the match*" epiphany/moment that determined the subsequent course of our lives? Do we remember? Do we want to?

Spirit, sex and everydayness in Joyce's Ulysses

DAVID J. FOGARTY

As occurs with the poets Thomas Hardy (1840-1928; the creator of Tess and Jude) and Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889; for whom the world was charged with a divine grandeur), everyday ordinariness becomes a marvel upon Joyce's touch...By returning to a very detailed exploration of the ordinary, Joyce manages to break open the hitherto unperceived marvels within everydayness. One of the novelties of Joyce is his verbatim representation of our personal, everyday consciousness...

...providing what was for that time an extraordinary insight into the female psyche; that the contents of female sexual fantasy are essentially no different to those which grace the male psyche. Bloom had little of the archetypal Spanish "macho" in him; he was rather a more secure person who respected the different feelings that his wife might have, neither expecting nor demanding that her emotional constitution conform to his.

In Ulysses, Joyce the priest-artist skilfully transforms the substance of everydayness into something divine, a life well worth living. Joyce experiences the long sought-after Divine, not in the esoteric mystical realms of spiritualism, but rather in the incarnate realm of the bits and pieces of everydayness, in "the little nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love" (Wordsworth).

[JL] ...a life well worth living... the bits and pieces of everydayness...

Here comes everybody

PAUL JOHNSTON

I think it was in The Wicklow, early in 2013, that I first met Éamon to discuss Bloomsday and celebrating it in Bilbao, having talked briefly about it with him at the LagunCara (Irish-Basque Association) Christmas fiesta. His enthusiasm or to use a Joycean word "alacrity", for Joyce was deep, intuitive, knowledgeable and infectious. Over a few pints we sketched out a rough outline of what we believed was achievable. We knew that there had to be 3 central elements: a sea scene, a cemetery scene, and a, you guessed it, pub scene. The pub scene, it was conclusively and definitively decided, should be, in keeping with our national decorum, kept to the last. On that blueprint, proceedings proceeded.

what really got me hooked on Joyce was his ability to make me see, smell, taste, hear, and feel the paralysed Dublin and Dubliners evoked and presented to the world in that collection of stories. Real people living real lives glimpsed through the rubric of childhood, adolescence, maturity, love, religion, nationality, family life, public life, politics; characters who I identified with, felt. Not forgetting, of course, the beautiful writing, the eye for detail, the empathy with and the understanding for the characters which shone through the pages...

Joyce the father, Beckett the son, and O'Brien the Holy Ghost.

[JL] see, smell, taste, hear, and feel ...

...(in the name of) Joyce the father, Beckett the son, and O'Brien the Holy Ghost.

"Melonsmellonous osculation"... Póg mo thóin

Joe Linehan

My first and everlasting memories of *Ulysses* are related to the five senses with all 5 being tickled in Episode 1 (Telemachus) with its *The snot green sea. The scrotum tightening sea* (I guess women being excluded from the experience).

In Barney Kiernan's pub, I can smell spilled stout on the floor mixed with sawdust, transporting me back to my childhood in Waterford city with my Dad... in a downtown drinking establishment. That smell has stayed with me [voice from the gallery: "What, the recollection or the smell itself?"].

...but the essence of the whole thing – Joyce crafts his narrative so that Bloom's decency and humanity shines through... and throughout...

...There's a lot of touching, at least in Molly's imaginings, in her soliloquy in the last (Penelope) episode (Father Ted would have said, "Down with that sort of thing!").

...all of us - women and men - are potential heroes, with warts an' all... just like Leopold Paula Bloom.

[JL] Some of you are heroes already, it's just you don't know it... yet. Most real heroes died unrecognised as such.

Discovering Bloomsday in the Basque Country

SUSAN AND JACQUES MANQUIN

We arrived as total strangers to the group, but all the members of the aptly-named Lagun-Cara association immediately made us feel like old friends and put us at ease straight away. Prior to the event, I had retrieved my unread copy of *Ulysses* which was gathering dust in the bookcase between Liam O'Flaherty and Edna O'Brien. We struggled through a quarter of the book before getting waylaid in Davy Byrne's, but decided to go to Vitoria nonetheless hoping that our ignorance of the masterpiece would not be too much of a handicap. Fortunately, we didn't have to be experts to enjoy the day in Vitoria thanks to the skills of Éamon...

[JL] There are worse places to get "waylaid" than in Davy Byrne's.

Who goes with Éamon?

SEAMUS MCQUAID

I am a slow reader...

But Ulysses is filled with real people, flawed people, like the gods of Ancient Greece, all parodied with a generosity under-lined by the words of "Loves Old Sweet Song"...

There is something joyous about a group of people, wherever they may be, pausing from time to time to share readings from a book. But one of the things that makes Ulysses special probably comes from the fact that it wasn't so much written as rewritten. You can open it anywhere and enjoy reading a few pages. Like a Greek epic, you already know the story, you have already heard it so many times, yet it seems to evolve with each reading. Every sentence seems to be loaded with a charge of mystery that reveals insights into others. Every word seems to be specifically chosen to be savoured. The more you discover, the more intrigued you are. But it is that over-riding spirit of generosity, a dedication of a great mind to his people at a historic turning point in their history, a celebration of real people in real places, people like you and me here right now, on this mythical voyage that is life.

[JL] Say no more...

I finished it, I did yes I did yes yes Yes!

PAT MULROY

But the enthusiasm of a certain Eamon Roche was infectious. He arrived to a lunch we held with our Irish and Basque friends after one of the famous Seamus McQuaid Irish Dancing troupe classes with printouts of Ulysses, Chapter 1 complete with notes on every line of the book. I got the idea then that Joyce was in the great Irish tradition taking on all the establishment forces and -isms around at the time. The Church in chapter one. Nationalism later on with The Citizen. Imperialism, anti-semitism, ... I think the Irish experience living with the imposition and injustices of foreign influence for so many years gives an interesting perspective on a lot of the powerful forces of the 20th Century.

[JL] Ditto.

Onaindia's odyssey: from ETA to Nighttown

PADDY WOODWORTH

I avoided reading Ulysses for as long as possible, until I was shamed into doing so in the early 1990s by Mario Onaindia...

Firstly, while Onaindia was no longer a Basque nationalist, he was still a Basque gastronome...His only previous experience on our island had been as a house guest of the Belfast Provos in the 1970s. They had filled him with Guinness, then fed him burnt bacon sangers in dark backrooms. Worse, when they woke this confirmed atheist, who by then had a monstrous hangover, they tried to drag him off to Sunday Mass. So he was ecstatic to find crab roulade instead of rashers on his plate at the restaurant of Mulligan's of Parkgate Street.

So, in Dublin, he wanted to follow every step of Bloom's journey, filming at each location, to later use as a backdrop to a Bloomsday TV show with Iberian literary figures (that bit never happened, to my knowledge). Through that long day and night, I was awed to find this once iconic Basque revolutionary holding forth to camera with multi-layered and learned interpretations of every major scene in the book. He made me painfully aware that I was still only barely familiar with a handful of them. So much for a TCD honours degree in English...

...Montgomery Street (Nighttown). This was no longer the red light district of Joyce's recollection, having been cleansed by the Legion of Mary after Independence. But it was now one of the epicentres of Dublin's heroin pandemic. We had two fancy cars and a lot of TV equipment. I suggested to Mario that it was unwise to film there at night under these circumstances, but he was undeterred. In the event, only one person accosted our out-of-place crew. He was a middle-aged, inner city Dubliner. He was very drunk, but he wanted to tell his story to the television. He was, he told us, on the way home from his son's funeral, dead of an overdose at 18. Joyce's Dublin had descended to new and grotesque catacombs. But my abiding memory of that whole experience is the fact that this Basque had read and absorbed Ulysses from every angle while in a prison cell, and his Irish guide had still not managed to finish it. I've read it twice since, so belated thanks, Mario, for pushing me to do so.

Worse, when they woke this confirmed atheist, who by then had a monstrous hangover, they tried to drag him off to Sunday Mass.

[JL] The task of this "confirmed atheist" with "a monstrous hangover" being dragged "off to Sunday Mass" must have been a task indeed.

An inner-city teenager, mortal victim of the system/drugs' businesses, is indeed a reminder that "Joyce's Dublin had descended to new and grotesque catacombs".

Comments on this selection of snippets to Joe at: wordlan2012@gmail.com