

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.