Fiction Sample

Excerpt from *Finnegan’s Wake* by James Joyce

Sniffer of carrion, premature gravedigger, seeker of the nest of evil in the bosom of a good word, you, who sleep at our vigil and fast for our feast, you with your dislocated reason, have cutely foretold, a jophet in your own absence, by blind poring upon your many scalds and burns and blisters, impetiginous sore and pustules, by the auspices of that raven cloud, your shade, and by the auguries of rooks in parlament, death with every disaster, the dynamitisation of colleagues, the reducing of records to ashes, the levelling of all customs by blazes, the return of a lot of sweettempered gunpowdered didst unto dudst but it never stphruck your mudhead’s obtundity (O hell, here comes our funeral! O pest, I’ll miss the post!) that the more carrots you chop, the more turnips you slit, the more murphies you peel, the more onions you cry over, the more bullbeef you butcher, the more mutton you crackerhack, the more potherbs you pound, the fiercer the fire and the longer your spoon and the harder you gruel with more grease to your elbow the merrier fumes your new Irish stew.

O, by the way, yes, another thing occurs to me. You let me tell you, with the utmost politeness, were very ordinarily designed, your birthwrong was, to fall in with Plan, as our nationals should, as all nationists must, and do a certain office (what, I will not tell you) in a certain holy office (nor will I say where) during certain agonising office hours (a clerical party all to yourself) from such a year to such an hour on such and such a date at so and so much a week pro anno (Guinness’s, may I remind, were just agulp for you, failing in which you might have taken the scales off boilers like any boskop of Yorek) and do your little thruppenny bit and thus earn from the nation true thanks, right here in our place of burden, your bourne of travail and ville of tares, where after a divine’s prodigence you drew the first watergasp in your life, from the crib where you once was bit to the crypt you’ll be twice as shy of, same as we, long of us, alone with the colt in the curner, where you were as popular as an armenial with the faithful, and you set fire to my tailcoat when I hold the paraffin smoker under yours (I hope that chimney’s clear) but, slackly shirking both your bullet and your billet, you beat it backwards like Boulanger from Galway (but he combed the grass against his stride) to sing us a song of alibi, (the cuthone call over the greybounding slowrolling amplyheaving metamorphoseous that oozy rocks parapangle their preposters with) nomad, mooner by lamplight, antinos, shemming amid everyone’s repressed laughter to conceal your scatchophily by mating, like a thorough-paste prosodite, masculine monosyllables of the same numerical mus, an Irish emigrant the wrong way out, sitting on your crooked sixpenny stile, an unfrillfrocked quackfriar, you (will you for the laugh of Scheekspair just help mine with the epithet?) semi-semitic serendipitist, you (thanks, I think that describes you) Europasianised Afferyank!