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O, it was out by Donnycarney

When the bat flew from tree to tree

My love and I did walk together

And sweet were the words she said to me.

Along with us the summer wind

Went murmuring – O, happily! –

But softer than the breath of summer

Was the kiss she gave to me.

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### Notes

This was No. 31 in the 1907 edition.

This poem contains the only Irish reference in the suite, to a small village (as was) on Dublin's northside, about four miles from the centre of the city.

Tindall has much to say about bats in Joyce, claiming that they symbolise 'darkness, secrecy, blindness, and loneliness' (217), and that Joyce associated them with women and artists. Amongst all these possibilities, the bat also suggests a dusky setting.

The 'summer wind' murmured happily ... in the past; what is it doing now?

The two touchstones (sweetness and softness) are invoked once again; but is the kiss soft 'good' – gentle, shy, enticing – or soft 'bad' – perfunctory, distracted, lacking in conviction?