

# THE MURDERED KING

by  
**PATRICK KAVANAGH**

**K**IND readers, I am here in London and as I write with a time-lag of a week it will be understood that we are still darkly under the awful cloud of a murdered king.

For President Kennedy fitted in the grand Shakespearean meaning of that word.

Not having seen any Irish papers I come new to the Irish view on this subject.

It had been my intention for some time to write a comment on what I believe was the finest example of the late President's courage, and that was his visit to Ireland this year.

Anyone with any knowledge of social behaviour will have encountered fellows in quite mean jobs studying hard and quickly when they meet a private friend whether it would be sound policy to recognise him in public. Somebody about to speak to you makes a snap decision and suddenly turns away. That is the bourgeois mind.

**P**RESIDENT KENNEDY was a brave and gay spirit to have come here; and I am certain that his wife, knowing the spirit behind that visit, invited the Irish Army unit to be part of the guard of honour at the funeral.

Mr. Kennedy's period of office is the only one I can think of, unless one goes back to Charlemagne or the Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, in which imagination, intelligence, virtue and man of letters ruled.

The murder of John Fitzgerald Kennedy is a great loss to the world, but a particular one to the Irish race and the Irish spirit of which he was never ashamed.

And now that I remember I did make some small reference in these pages to the courage implied in Mr. Kennedy's visit, I pointed out that anyone will visit you when out of power.

There is nothing provokes hate and envy so much as nobility and virtue. A man recognised as possessing these things is in constant peril.

I do hope that some poet will be inspired to write an elegy worthy of the man.

There was O'Hussey's Ode to the Maguire, "The Burial of Sir John Moore" and also the lament for Flodden "The Flowers of the Forest" which was played at his funeral.

This, for us, is at least as great a sorrow as Flodden.

**O**F all the tributes paid to the man that I read I thought that the tribute by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Ramsey, was the best.

He pointed out that the reaction to Mr. Kennedy's murder showed the kind of qualities — beauty, love, courage — that the vast majority of mankind admired.

These were the virtues I mentioned already.

And when I thought of the rag and bone gods, the gods from the English slums that young people are supposed to worship, I could dismiss the lie.

We are not defeated.

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**A**ND I learned here in London since I came — though I should have found it out earlier — the truth of all I had been saying in defiance of screaming critics supposing themselves to be "with it," when in fact they were with nothing but illiterate fashion.

Everyone here has been saying the same.

These old ones are stealing the show all the time. But let nobody think that I believe in old ones and old things.

I believe in spring and the sun rising, shining on the dew-wet grass and myself on a hill aged twenty-one.

Young friends, when you imagine yourselves with it, remember you are only with the rascality of some oily-faced promoter.

If by any chance you find yourself with the poet you will find yourself with youth and hope on the high hills.

the  
mint  
with the  
true-mint  
taste



the cool, clear sweet that  
refreshes you most of all

**FOX'S** *Glacier* **MINTS**