

The Angels take the Number 4B

by Stuart Finegan

On a black and white Wednesday morning, a soft rain greeted the few brave souls heading to the bus stop. Too early for words.
The faint nod of their heads acknowledged their arrival.
Three women, two men.

Who are they?
What do they do?
Where are they going at this god awful hour?
The man in the purple jacket is half asleep.

Taking their seats, the bus slowly pulled out into the deserted street. In turn wiping condensation from the window beside them. Unfolding steaming toast from crisp foil paper, a book, yesterday's paper, day-dreaming out the window, a Rosary bead for comfort. Each to their own on the Number 4B.

Outside a heavy grey wet sky welcomes them onto Parnell Street. Deserted streets washed clean with the tears of an angle. Focusing on the lady in the blue coat. Her long wet bedraggled hair hides her pale skin, striking blue eyes. Under her breath words emerge to no one in particular. The bell rings. The bus slows down outside the G.P.O.

John Crater, shovel in one hand, a dog lead in the other and a hessian bag slung over his shoulder steps on board. Everyone knows John. Greets his fellow workers with a polite facial expression, then sits at the back. Cut deep into his face the lines of a hard-working man. The heavens opened. Crying angles washed yesterday's chip paper down bottomless gutters.

I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking. Unknown characters sitting centre stage. Individually each with their own story to tell. Secrets to hide. They read from a unscripted script. Reaching to the environment around them, one by one they come into focus.
Then fade away.

Dame Street next stop. Carefully folding away a half-finished book, the young woman in the overwhelming yellow jacket stands up, rings the bell and sits back down. The gentleman sat opposite politely but barely audible says thank you. They get off in silence and walk in opposite directions.

The clock turned six past six.

Christ Church on the left-hand side, shrouded in mist. The weather will make or break their day. Next stop comes and goes. The cast remains the same. Turning Into Phoenix Park the dog barks loudly. The leading lady in the blue coat walks slowly to the front of the bus. No need to ring the bell this time. A polite thank you as the stage doors opened before stepping off into the soft morning rain.

Smithfield market.

The last stop.

With reluctance they gathered their thoughts.

Strangers intimate lives captured in black and white.