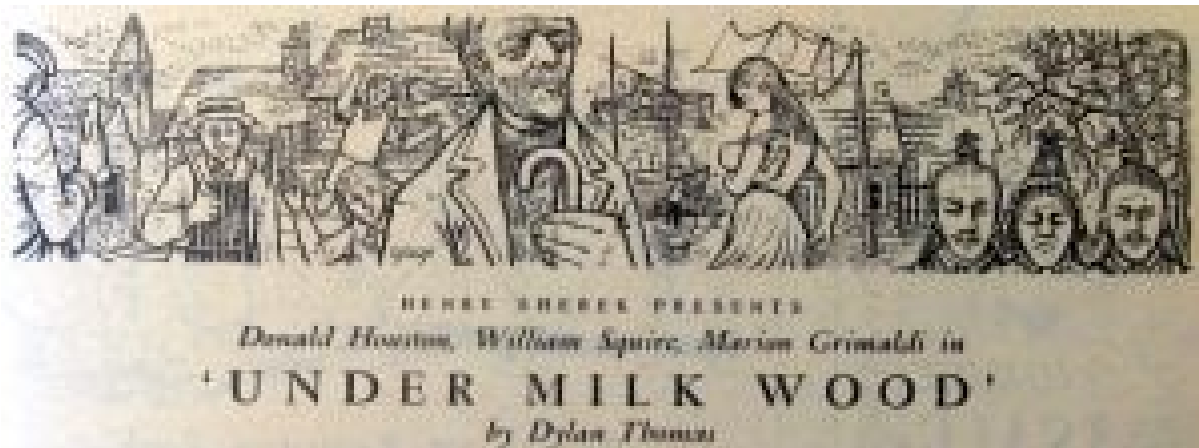


93 And Not Dead Yet – Under Milk Wood



by [Reg Green](#) (March 2022)

As one Covid-related restriction follows another, there is a silver lining: we can spend more time at home, uninterrupted, with those we love. Dylan Thomas' radio play, *Under Milk Wood*, captured precious moments like these in deepest Wales. Here is an extract to mark St. David's Day, March 1.

Table Talk

FIRST VOICE

In the blind-drawn dark dining-room of School House, dusty and echoing as a dining-room in a vault, Mr and Mrs Pugh are silent over cold grey cottage pie. Mr Pugh reads, as he forks the shroud meat in, from *Lives of the Great Poisoners*. He has bound a plain brown-paper cover round the book. Slyly, between slow mouthfuls, he sidespies up at Mrs Pugh, poisons her with his eye, then goes on reading. He underlines certain passages and smiles in secret.

MRS PUGH

Persons with manners do not read at table,

FIRST VOICE

says Mrs Pugh. She swallows a digestive tablet as big as a horse-pill, washing it down with clouded pea-soup water.

MRS PUGH

Some persons were brought up in pigsties.

MR PUGH

Pigs don't read at table, dear.

FIRST VOICE

Bitterly she flicks dust from the broken cruets. It settles on the pie in a thin gnat-rain.

MR PUGH

Pigs can't read, my dear.

MRS PUGH

I know one who can.

FIRST VOICE

Alone in the hissing laboratory of his wishes, Mr Pugh minces among bad vats and jeroboams, tiptoes through spinneys of murdering herbs, agony dancing in his crucibles, and mixes especially for Mrs Pugh a venomous porridge unknown to toxicologists which will scald and viper through her until her ears fall off like figs, her toes grow big and black as balloons, and steam comes screaming out of her navel.

MR PUGH

You know best, dear,

FIRST VOICE

says Mr Pugh, and quick as a flash he ducks her in rat soup.

MRS PUGH

What's that book by your trough, Mr Pugh?

MR PUGH

It's a theological work, my dear. *Lives of the Great Saints*.

FIRST VOICE

Mrs Pugh smiles. An icicle forms in the cold air of the dining-vault.

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Reg Green is an economics journalist who was born in England and worked for the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Times of London*. He emigrated to the US in 1970.

His life changed course in 1994 when his seven-year old son, Nicholas, was shot in an attempted robbery while on a family vacation in Italy. He and his wife, Maggie, donated Nicholas' organs and corneas to seven Italians, a decision that stimulated organ donation around the world and is known as "[The Nicholas Effect](#)." Reg wrote a book, also called [The Nicholas Effect](#), which was the basis of the television movie, "Nicholas' Gift," starring Alan Bates and Jamie Lee Curtis. At

93, he continues to work full-time to bring attention to the hundreds of thousands of lives that have been lost because of the shortage of donated organs.

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