

## HOW SAM LOST HIS JOB

The Head Office of Greet Treats Ltd, Dublin, 1928

- MR G: Sam, come in. Sorry to keep you waiting. How are you today?
- SAM: Well. I don't mean 'healthy', though I am, objectively speaking. Rather 'well' is a temporising device while I wrestle with the utter nullity of social discourse...
- MR G: Quite, quite. Now, Sam Company policy requires a one month appraisal for all new employees. For a university bod like yourself this is normally a formality. However, in your case, unusually, I... How can I put it? Words fail me...
- SAM: Of course they do, sir. Words are the flimsy tissue with which we strain to cover our existential nakedness from the forked lightning of an irredeemably hostile Universe. Words are the unfaithful retainers who rob and betray us at every turn. Words are...
- MR G: Quite, quite. You recall me to my purpose admirably. Let us review some of your contributions for the Creative Department. (*Reads*):  
*We always find something to give us the impression we exist.*  
*Every word is an unnecessary stain on silence and nothingness.*  
*Nothing is funnier than unhappiness.*  
*Nothing is more real than nothing.*  
*You're on earth. There's no cure for that.*  
For Christmas Cards? Birthday Greetings? Well, Sam, what do you say?
- SAM: Too many *nothings*, sir, if you must run them all together like that.
- MR G: Hmm. Well, then let's consider our staff... Since you arrived it's been scandal after scandal. Mrs Foster, head of the typing pool and the Church choir was arrested dancing stark naked on the Liffey Viaduct at 1 AM. 1 A M! Last Sunday Mr Paisley, the Printer ran off to Naples with Oscar the Apprentice. Over night your fellow writer Brian O'Flenn has taken to drink. "In no small way," he says. Well?
- SAM: Watt's it got to do with me?
- MR G: All four were exposed to your work, Sam. We hired you to write jolly jokes for Christmas Crackers and Greeting Cards. They're our best selling line. Christmas is the most ghastly time of year when we crave reliable, reassuring, pious banality. Birthdays need a good laugh. But you gave us... Reality. With our depleted work force, these abominations were printed and sold before we realised. They are landing on doormats all over the country! What on earth were you thinking?
- SAM: Possibly showing off to an imaginary girlfriend... But I can do the comedy thing. Er... Er... "What noise does a one-eyed horse make? Cy-clops cy-clops cy-clops!" No? "Why was there an accident at the cricket match? Someone batted an eyelid...."
- MR G: "What do you call someone who has to leave Ireland because angry mobs are combing the streets for him? An Ex-Isle." Here's £2 severance and a ticket to Paris. Go peddle your misery there and see how they like it. Goodbye, Mr Beckett.