

Work Place by Robert Cullen

It just said in the window, **Messenger Boy Wanted. Apply Within.** It was my first job. The interview went well – there was no C.V then. I was to wear a white or blue plain shirt and tie – no tartan shirt or drain pipe trouser or wedge shoes (teddy boy). They were looking for me to start the following Monday. The wages were one pound & a half crown - the same as 126 euro per week now. I had just left school the previous June. This was at the end of the fifths. My mother gave me 26 back. The company was established in 1823 and was called Pigott & Co, The House of Music. They had pianos, musical instruments, Dept sheet music, Dept Records, 78's LP 33's, EP 45's , all for record players, and of course the Hammond Organ. The customers all read music and many were from Radio Éireann. They had strange names – Viscount Devisi, Lady Powerscourt, Lord Revelstoke from Lambay Island, Lord Aranmore and Brown, Count Talbot de Malahide from Malahide Castle.

The company's vans displayed music of Percy French from the song, 'The Mountains of Mourne.' Each van had a different line from the song.

The building was right across the road from the Provost's House in Grafton Street, which was part of Trinity College. I had never been in there, but when I did – the Christian Brothers School I went to never told us about this – I discovered they even talk differently in there. This college dominated the middle of Dublin and was a Bastion of British Imperialism at College Street.

The Company certainly left music in my soul. Alas the company went on fire in 1966 and never reopened. I was made redundant and Nelson's Pillar was blown up. I got married to Imelda. A good start.

This poem was written in response to a writing prompt from Enda Wyley as part of a series of writing classes at Richmond Barracks. These classes are part of *Culture Connects*, a Dublin City Council Culture Company programme.

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